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## THESIS

**LESSONS LEARNED: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF  
THE INTEGRATION EXPERIENCES OF ARMENIAN  
AND PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON**

by

Pascal Ghobeira

June 2017

Thesis Co-Advisors:

Carolyn Halladay  
Florina Cristiana Matei

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EXPERIENCES OF ARMENIAN AND PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN  
LEBANON**

Pascal Ghobeira  
Captain, Lebanese Army  
B.E., Notre Dame University Louaize, 2008  
M.S., Saint Joseph University (Lebanon), 2013

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**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL  
June 2017**

Approved by: Carolyn Halladay  
Co-Advisor

Florina Cristiana Matei  
Co-Advisor

Mohammed M. Hafez  
Chair, Department of National Security Affairs

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis analyzes the factors contributing to the differing degrees of integration achieved by the Armenian and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. The two case studies presented include a historical overview of these refugees in Lebanon, the international response to the refugee crisis, the legal status of the discussed refugees in Lebanon, and the evolution of refugee identity. The analysis of the case studies uses the conceptual framework of Alastair Ager and Alison Strang, who wrote “Understanding Integration,” which appeared in the June 2008 *Journal of Refugee Studies*.

The thesis also reviews the available literature written from a Western perspective, which rarely considers the role of religion in the integration process of refugees. In the Lebanese dilemma, where demographic balance is a major factor in domestic stability, religious affiliation emerges as a main influence in the contrasting treatment of Armenian and Palestinian refugees.

With the continued conflict in Syria, Lebanon and other countries face similar challenges in addressing the refugee crisis. Thus, successful integration methods must include not only policies that address the humanitarian side of refugee flows but also the burden on host communities. Based on the case studies, the thesis concludes with recommendations for successfully integrating Syrian refugees in Lebanon, and policies that other host countries could adapt.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

AUB	American University of Beirut
DPRA	Department of Political and Refugees Affairs
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
MEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
PRS	Palestine refugees from Syria
RACE	Reaching All Children with Education
UKIP	UK Independent Party
UNCCP	United Nations Conciliation Commission on Palestine
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
USJ	Saint Joseph University

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I want to dedicate this work to my wife, Marie Noel, and daughter, Laia. I am sincerely grateful for your support and patience throughout this process.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The interconnectedness of Lebanon and Syria dates back to ancient times through the period of Ottoman rule to the colonial era. As parts of what is historically known as Greater Syria, the modern states of Lebanon and Syria have been linked economically, socially, and politically.<sup>1</sup> They also are connected by conflict; thousands of Syrians fleeing their war-torn country have sought refuge in Lebanon, which is close, both geographically and culturally. The Open Door policy adopted by the Lebanese government when the conflict first started in Syria has allowed the free flow of more than 1.5 million Syrians, regardless of the nature of their displacement.<sup>2</sup> According to the assessments of the Lebanese government, the total number of refugees in May 2014 “constitutes 28.9 percent of Lebanon’s pre-conflict population estimated at around 4 million persons in 1997.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, alarmingly, Lebanon witnessed an accelerated growth in its population that surpassed projections for 2041.<sup>4</sup>

This unprecedented influx of refugees has left Lebanon vulnerable to mounting tensions between some of the largest segments of this immigrant population. During the Syrian presidential elections, thousands of Syrians disrupted traffic in Beirut as they marched toward their embassy, often chanting in support of President Bashar al-Assad.<sup>5</sup> The elections revealed that Syrians in Lebanon are far from being one homogeneous anti-regime group.<sup>6</sup> Several parties, therefore, fear that Syrian refugees might carry with them to Lebanon the same dynamics that fuel the Syrian conflict.

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Collelo and Harvey Henry Smith, *Lebanon: A Country Study*. (Washington, DC: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1989), xxii.

<sup>2</sup> Filippo Dionigi, *The Syrian Refugee Crisis in Lebanon: State Fragility and Social Resilience* (London: LSE Middle East Center, 2016), 11, [http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/65565/1/Dionigi\\_Syrian\\_Refugees%20in%20Lebanon\\_Author\\_2016.pdf](http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/65565/1/Dionigi_Syrian_Refugees%20in%20Lebanon_Author_2016.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Environment, *Lebanon Environmental Assessment of the Syrian Conflict & Priority Interventions* (Beirut: Ministry of Environment, 2014), 1, <http://www.undp.org/content/dam/lebanon/docs/Energy%20and%20Environment/Publications/EASC-WEB.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Dionigi, *Syrian Refugee Crisis in Lebanon*, 13–14.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

The current refugee crisis is not the first in Lebanon's history. In the midst of World War I, for example, thousands of Armenians fled to Lebanon, where they established a distinct community. Even nowadays, recent generations of Armenians are successful in preserving their original identity and culture. Armenians in Lebanon, however, are not isolated. On the contrary, Armenians enrich Lebanon in all aspects, having become an integrated minority in Lebanese society.

In contrast, the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon remain isolated from a society that shares many similar characteristics with their own. As a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, more than 700,000 Palestinians lost their homes and means of livelihood.<sup>7</sup> Many chose to relocate to neighboring countries. In Lebanon, they lack several rights that other immigrants enjoy; for instance, Palestinians are prohibited from working in as many as 20 professions, such as medicine, law, or engineering because, legally, they are stateless.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, they are not treated as other foreigners living and working in Lebanon. Moreover, around 53 percent of the 450,000 Palestinians currently registered with United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in Lebanon live in refugee camps.<sup>9</sup> Still, their isolation from the rest of society did not stop some from assuming a principal role in the Lebanese civil war (1975–1990). Lebanon's national security continues to be eroded by the presence of isolated Palestinian communities that provide breeding grounds for terrorists.

## **A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION**

**What accounts for the difference in the degree of integration between the Armenian and the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon?**

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<sup>7</sup> United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, *The United Nations and Palestinian Refugees* (Gaza: Public Information Office, Headquarters, 2007), 2, <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2010011791015.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> “Where We Work: Lebanon,” United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, accessed December 1, 2016, <http://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/lebanon>; Jad Chaaban et al., *Socio-economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon* (Beirut: American University of Beirut and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, 2010), 13, <https://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2011012074253.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> “Where We Work: Lebanon,” United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

This thesis analyzes the cases of Armenian and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon to determine what caused the differences in the integration process of these refugees within the Lebanese society. Although the Syrian refugees are not isolated like the Palestinian refugees, they face similar challenges to becoming integrated within Lebanese society. Specifically, they are facing similar—and increasing—pressure to return to Syria. This thesis examines whether it is rational for the Lebanese government to promote this option while the war in Syria has not ended, leaving the Syrian refugees no alternative but to get involved in combat activity while on Lebanese soil.

The war in Syria is not likely to end in the near future. Even if it did, the Syrian refugees might remain in Lebanon for years before going back to their country. Their integration within Lebanese society may be crucial to prevent future radicalization and other security-related issues that seem to increase whenever refugees live in isolated and poor conditions. Drawing conclusions based on the Armenian and Palestinian cases, this thesis proposes policy recommendations that could be applied to the current Syrian refugee crisis.

## **B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION**

Of course, providing humanitarian aid to the Syrian refugees is a priority; however, dealing with the increased pressure on Lebanon's infrastructure, economy, and national security should not be neglected, either. The sharp increase in the demand for public services, including health, education, electricity, water, and waste disposal, has put a lot of strain on Lebanon. In December 2012, for example, Syrian refugees accounted for 40 percent of total health visits.<sup>10</sup> Since 2011, petty crimes have increased by more than 60 percent, overcrowding the Lebanese prisons to the extent that more than 26 percent of the population in Lebanese prisons is Syrians.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, Lebanon is facing terrorism threats on a daily basis. The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and Jabhat al-Nusra have tried to establish secure bases on Lebanon's eastern border with Syria.

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<sup>10</sup> Syria Needs Analysis Project, *Lebanon Baseline Information* (Geneva: ACAPS, 2013), 2, <https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=3191>.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

Refugees are increasingly drawn to these extremist organizations that capitalize on the isolation of the Syrians from the rest of the Lebanese society.

Despite the civil strife period, Lebanon, as a multi-faith society, is a model for religious coexistence in the Middle East. Precariously, Lebanon has managed to overcome the ramifications of the Sunni-Shia divide in the Muslim world.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, democratic Lebanon also has maintained its political stability throughout the Arab Spring that toppled bigger republican governments in the region.

The resilience of Lebanon in coping with both internal and external threats has increased the international community's trust in one of the smallest countries in the regions. Since 2006, Lebanon received more than \$1 billion in assistance from the United States to build Lebanon's institutions, including the Lebanese Armed Forces, to confront a range of security challenges.<sup>13</sup> The United States continues to be Lebanon's biggest ally in the war on terror. Furthermore, U.S. ambassador to Lebanon Elizabeth Richards affirms Lebanon's role in the stability in the Middle East, an indispensable part of U.S. national security.<sup>14</sup>

This thesis, however, is not only relevant to Lebanon. European and other Western countries are facing similar challenges in addressing the Syrian refugee flow, which is accompanied by or even resulting in the rise of right-wing parties and the emergence of populist politicians. The cultural and religious gap between Syrian refugees and European host communities further complicates the situation. The integration of refugees is an indispensable objective for policymakers; however, steady refugee flows have sparked suspicions in Lebanon and Western countries alike about the changing nature of the host communities, a phenomenon that underline major policies. If the

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<sup>12</sup> After Prophet Muhammad's death, a bitter split over his succession led to Islam's Sunni-Shia divide. For more information, see Robert Brenton Betts, *The Sunni-Shi'a Divide: Islam's Internal Divisions and their Global Consequences* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), <https://muse.jhu.edu/book/27148>

<sup>13</sup> Christopher M. Blanchard, *Lebanon: Background and U.S. Policy* (CRS Report No. R42816) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2014), 11, <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/R42816.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> "New U.S. Ambassador Says Lebanon Stability Important for Region Stability," *Naharnet*, June 21, 2016, <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/211853>.

change is more than these communities can bear, then new policies should address the humanitarian side of refugee flows without neglecting the impact on host communities.

### **C. LEBANON'S POWER SHARING**

The research on the integration of Armenian and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon must be grounded in Lebanon's modern history. During the Ottoman rule, "Lebanon," actually referred to as Mount Lebanon, was a predominantly Christian region "limited roughly to the Lebanon mountain range extending as far north and south as Tripoli and Sidon, but not including these cities."<sup>15</sup> After the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I, the Allied Supreme Council granted France mandatory control of Mount Lebanon and Greater Syria. A few months later, France proclaimed the creation of the State of Greater Lebanon.<sup>16</sup>

The establishment of this new state followed a significant expansion of Lebanon's boundaries. During World War I, the Maronite community, a longstanding French ally in the Arab world, had pressed for the extension of Mount Lebanon's frontier to strengthen its political and economic power in the Arab world. The French, however, had legitimate fears that the Christians would lose their overwhelming majority in a larger country. After minor reluctance, France agreed to fulfill the Maronites' pressing demands. At Syria's expense, therefore, the French authorities almost doubled Lebanon's territory by annexing to Mount Lebanon the Bekaa plains and the coastal regions of Tripoli, Beirut, Sidon, and Tyre.<sup>17</sup> In contrast to the religious composition of Mount Lebanon, these new regions consisted mainly of Muslims.<sup>18</sup> The French feared that their Maronite allies were bound to lose their hegemony in the new country.

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<sup>15</sup> Joseph Chamie, "The Lebanese Civil War: An Investigation into the Causes," *World Affairs* 139, no. 3 (1977): 171, ProQuest (58960234).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

For three-quarters of a century, the interconnectedness of politics, religion, and demography has remained an enduring characteristic of Lebanon.<sup>19</sup> With 18 officially recognized sects, Lebanon nurtures the religious diversity among its different constituents. These sects, most of which belong to either Christianity or Islam, serve as the “primary social organization[s] through which political security has been maintained.”<sup>20</sup> The Lebanese confessional democracy assures each religious sect, based on its size, a proportional share of the political power.

Despite the overriding importance of religion in Lebanese affairs, there are no official statistics of the country’s religious composition. In 1932, Lebanon carried out its only population census.<sup>21</sup> Figure 1 shows, in addition to the 1932 census, a series of debatable estimates on the religious composition of the Lebanese population.

Religious sect	1932	1943	1956	1986	2005
Maronites	28.8	30.4	30.0	16.0	19.0
Shiites	19.6	19.2	17.7	41.0	34.0*
Sunnis	22.4	21.3	20.3	27.0	21.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	785,543	1,046,421	1,411,000	2,204,000	3,728,000

Figure 1. Percentage of the Three Largest Religious Sects in Lebanon by Year, 1932–2005.<sup>22</sup>

Based on the 1932 census, Christians enjoyed a stronger representation, a six-to-five ratio, over Muslims in political posts.<sup>23</sup> Clearly, this figure does not hold anymore. Moreover, hardly anyone doubts that the demographic status of Christians in Lebanon is in decline. Since 1932, however, there has not been a full census because of the

<sup>19</sup> Muhammad A. Faour, "Religion, Demography, and Politics in Lebanon," *Middle Eastern Studies* 43, no. 6 (2007): 909, doi: 10.1080/00263200701568279.

<sup>20</sup> Faour, "Religion, Demography, and Politics in Lebanon," 909.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Source: Faour, "Religion, Demography, and Politics in Lebanon," 912.

<sup>23</sup> Simon Haddad, *The Palestinian Impasse in Lebanon: The Politics of Refugee Integration* (Brighton, UK: Sussex Academic Press, 2003), 3.

underlying risks of new destabilizing results.<sup>24</sup> On the other end of the spectrum lies the unlikely assumption that Muslims outnumber Christians by a two-to-one ratio.<sup>25</sup>

Nowadays, the equal representation between Christians and Muslims, instead of the six-to-five ratio, governs the political system. Still, given that “the post of the president is reserved for a Maronite, the Prime Minister is a Sunni, and the Speaker of the House is a Shi’a,”<sup>26</sup> the fragile stability of Lebanon lies in a precarious balance of power among its three major sects: Maronite Christians, Sunni Muslims, and Shiite Muslims.

#### **D. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES**

The literature review, presented in Chapter II, does not deal specifically with the case studies addressed by the research question. The distinction, however, made in the literature review between the concept of integration in race relations studies in comparison to its use in refugee studies can help outline potential explanations for the disparities in the integration outcomes of the Armenian and Palestinian refugees.

Race relations studies provide one possible explanation through scholar Shmuel Eisenstadt’s third stage of absorption, which is characterized by the development of a new identity as a basis for personal adjustment.<sup>27</sup> Armenians and Palestinians diverge on this point. Moreover, religion, being part of the identity, plays an important role in the different level of acceptance of that refugees experience from the Lebanese society. The right of return to Palestine, which is advocated by both the Palestinian refugees and the Lebanese government, obstructs the development of this new identity required for the integration process. Certainly, Armenians did not completely forgo their historical and

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<sup>24</sup> Rebecca Roberts, *Palestinians in Lebanon: Refugees Living with Long-term Displacement* (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2010), 71.

<sup>25</sup> Haddad, *Palestinian Impasse*, 3.

<sup>26</sup> Faour, "Religion, Demography, and Politics in Lebanon," 909; Roberts, *Refugees Living with Long-term Displacement*, 71.

<sup>27</sup> Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, *The Absorption of Immigrants: A Comparative Study Based Mainly on the Jewish Community in Palestine and the State of Israel* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1954), quoted in Barry N. Stein, "The Refugee Experience: Defining the Parameters of a Field of Study," *International Migration Review* 15, no. 1/2 (1981): 329, doi: 10.2307/2545346.

religious identity, but they have considered their lives in Lebanon an essential and positive step towards a better Armenian existence across the world.

Refugee studies outline several factors that can contribute to explain the disparities in the integration outcomes of both cases. Foremost, the debatable citizenship described in Alastair Ager and Alison Strang's framework, a requirement for successful integration, seems, at first glance, a prominent explanation for the non-integration experience of Palestinian refugees since Palestinians born in Lebanon do not obtain Lebanese citizenship and are still considered refugees. Palestinian refugees themselves, however, consider obtaining a new citizenship as treason to their cause and the right to have their own independent state. Moreover, if Lebanon agrees on the naturalization of Palestinian refugees, it is also considered a departure from pan-Arab agreement to support the return of Palestinians to their lands. This alignment of interests between the Lebanese government and Palestinian refugees echoes Sara Kenyon Lischer's analysis of the political dimensions that led to the rise of refugee warriors and their use of violence.<sup>28</sup>

## **E. RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research design is based on two comparative case studies, examining Palestinian and Armenian refugees in Lebanon, respectively. These two cases are particularly significant because they share certain characteristics, yet result in different integration outcomes and security challenges. This thesis compares the integration of Armenian refugees in Lebanon to that of the Palestinian refugees to understand their similarities and differences.

For each case study, the thesis presents a historical overview detailing the presence of the refugee community in Lebanon. It also discusses the response of the international community to the crisis. The thesis then outlines the legal status and rights of the refugees, before laying out the identity evolution of each refugee community. After introducing the two case studies in separate chapters, the thesis provides a detailed analysis using Ager and Strang's "Indicators of Integration Framework" to determine

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<sup>28</sup> Sara Kenyon Lischer, *Dangerous Sanctuaries: Refugee Camps, Civil War, and the Dilemmas of Humanitarian aid* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 1-15.



which factors caused the disparities in the integration outcomes of these the two cases.<sup>29</sup> Lastly, this thesis uses the lessons learned from the Armenian and Palestinian case studies to provide some required policy recommendations for the integration of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

## **F. THESIS OVERVIEW AND CHAPTER OUTLINE**

The introductory chapter provides the necessary contextual background to frame the research question. The rest of this thesis proceeds as follows. The next chapter presents the literature review and outlines the framework to be used in the analysis of the two case studies. Chapters III and IV of this thesis explore the case studies of the Armenian and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, respectively. Chapter V presents the analysis of the two case studies using the conceptual framework that was outlined in Chapter II. The analysis presents the priorities of the factors that lead to the integration of refugees. Chapter VI covers the current Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon. This final chapter uses the lessons learned from the analysis of the two case studies to propose some policy recommendations to deal with the Syrian refugee crisis.

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<sup>29</sup> Alastair Ager and Alison Strang, “Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework,” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 21, no. 2 (June 2008): 169–170, doi: 10.1093/jrs/fen016.

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## II. REFUGEES: A LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of the causes and consequences of the forced migration of people has grown into its own field of studies in the last decades of the 20th century. This literature review, bounded by the major research question, focuses on the integration of refugees. First, the literature review underscores how the definition of the term refugee evolved since the Second World War. Next, it examines the concept of integration as it is used in both race relations studies and refugee studies. The final part of the literature review addresses the security threats arising from refugees to shed light on possible ramifications of the failure to integrate the Syrian refugees.

### A. DEFINING REFUGEES

Refugees have become a permanent feature of the international scene. Still, to define a refugee according to a single universal formula involves an unrealistic assumption that all refugees embark on their journeys for the same reasons. In their book, *Escape from Violence*, Sergio Aguayo, Astri Suhrke, and Aristide Zolberg point out that Jacques Vernant probably was not wrong when, in 1953, he observed that “in everyday speech a refugee is someone who has been compelled to abandon his home.”<sup>30</sup> The authors argue, however, that this diffuse meaning can only be found in ordinary parlance, whereas in legal and administrative circles, “refugee” holds a much more selective and precise meaning.<sup>31</sup>

The definition of “refugee” has changed with the nature of refugees over the years. The internationally adopted definition of refugee is embodied in the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, its 1967 Protocol, and the Statute of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).<sup>32</sup> In the aftermath of World

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<sup>30</sup> Jacques Vernant, *The Refugee in the Post-War World* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1953), 5, quoted in Sergio Aguayo, Astri Suhrke and Aristide R. Zolberg, *Escape from Violence: Conflict and the Refugee Crisis in the Developing World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 3.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Susan M. Akram, “Palestinian Refugees and their Legal Status: Rights, Politics, and Implications for a Just Solution,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 31, no. 3 (2002): 36, doi: 10.1525/jps.2002.31.3.36.

War II, during which thousands of people were displaced, the 1951 Convention defined a refugee as “someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.”<sup>33</sup> Article 1D of the 1951 Convention, however, excludes from this definition the Palestinian refugees who were protected and assisted by other UN agencies such as the United Nations Conciliation Commission on Palestine (UNCCP) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA).<sup>34</sup> According to UNRWA, “Palestine refugees” refers to “persons whose normal residence was in Palestine between 1 June 1946 and 15 May 1948, and who lost their homes and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict.”<sup>35</sup>

Beyond the 1951 Convention, regional arrangements expanded the definition of refugee to fit the region’s special requirements. The extended refugee definition offers protection to vulnerable people not covered by the 1951 Convention. One important development to the refugee definition emerged in 1969 through the Convention on Refugee Problems in Africa to include the unique nature of refugee flows on this continent.<sup>36</sup> According to this African convention, those compelled to flee “owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination, or events seriously disturbing public order in either part of the whole of his country of origin or nationality” are also to be accepted as refugees.<sup>37</sup> Through deeper analysis, Micah Rankin finds the African refugee definition contrasted with the one found in the 1951 Convention in its objectivity, non-

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<sup>33</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*, (Geneva: UNHCR Communications and Public Information Service, 2010), 3, <http://www.unhcr.org/protect/PROTECTION/3b66c2aa10.pdf>; In the same year, 1951, more than one million people remained refugees of World War II under this definition. For more information, see United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, *The United Nations and Palestinian Refugees* (Gaza: Public Information Office, Headquarters, 2007), <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2010011791015.pdf>.

<sup>34</sup> Akram, “Palestinian Refugees and their Legal Status,” 39.

<sup>35</sup> “Palestine Refugees,” United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, accessed April 26, 2017, <https://www.unrwa.org/palestine-refugees>.

<sup>36</sup> Peter Gatrell, *The Making of the Modern Refugee* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 6.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

specificity to certain causes of flight, and group flight focus.<sup>38</sup> Another development took place in Central America; the Cartagena Declaration, adopted by ten states, further recognized the flight from “massive violation of human rights.”<sup>39</sup>

Despite the broader definition of refugee, the universally adopted 1951 Convention had its own shortcomings. For one, it explicitly covered only European refugees of World War II. Jeremy Hein explains that up until the 1967 amendment, the 1951 Convention did not reach out to “refugees in the rest of the world.”<sup>40</sup> According to Liisa Malkki, the Euro-centrism in the refugee definition is justified by the European effort to innovatively standardize and develop key techniques to manage the mass displacement of people after World War II.<sup>41</sup>

Another shortcoming of the definition was the emphasis on the ambiguous “persecution” condition, a remnant of the Euro-centric development to the refugee definition. Although none of the UN conventions clarifies “persecution,” Peter Gatrell considers persecution a key criterion to protect those fleeing from the Soviet Union and other totalitarian states.<sup>42</sup> Even after lifting the time and geographical restrictions in the 1967 Protocol, the post-war definition bestowed refugee status—and protections—only to the individual who could demonstrate persecution.<sup>43</sup> This emphasis on the individual who did not fit the persecution criterion left other forced migrants in the developing world without protection. For instance, Susan Akram explains how Palestinians living outside Palestine “cannot claim the original persecution by Israel because they are not Israeli

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<sup>38</sup> Micah Bond Rankin, “Extending the Limits or Narrowing the Scope? Deconstructing the OAU Refugee Definition Thirty Years on,” *South African Journal on Human Rights* 21, no. 3 (2005): Abstract, ProQuest (36471860).

<sup>39</sup> Guy S. Goodwin-Gill, “The International Law of Refugee Protection,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee Migration Studies*, ed. Elena Fiddian-Qasimiyeh, Gil Loescher, Katy Long, and Nando Sigona (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 41.

<sup>40</sup> Jeremy Hein, “Refugees, Immigrants, and the State,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 19 (1993): 44, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2083380>.

<sup>41</sup> Liisa H. Malkki, “Refugees and Exile: From ‘Refugee Studies’ to the National Order of Things,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24, (1995): 497–98, ProQuest (199824943).

<sup>42</sup> Gatrell, *Modern Refugee*, 284.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 6; Akram, “Palestinian Refugees and their Legal Status,” 36.

nationals.”<sup>44</sup> In the typical African group flights as well, Guy S. Goodwin-Gill notes that the UNHCR could not apply the individualized approach in refugee status assessment that took place in Europe.<sup>45</sup> According to UNHCR’s staff, the case-by-case assessment required to prove the persecution condition was, at best, impractical in underdeveloped Africa.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, Gatrell and Akram still consider the individualized approach an improvement to the pre-war doctrine that afforded protection only to certain specified groups.<sup>47</sup>

Some scholars even go so far as to decry a gender gap in this uneven protection. In the book, *Human Rights and Social Justice in a Global Perspective*, Susan Mapp discusses how the international community’s focus on persecution leaves women and children without protection.<sup>48</sup> Likewise, scholars David Cox and Manohar Pawar recognize the tendency to consider males the direct focus of persecution, despite the fact that women and children suffer greatly during conflicts.<sup>49</sup>

## **B. THE CONCEPT OF INTEGRATION IN RACE RELATIONS STUDIES**

The lack of a consistent, generally accepted definition of integration leaves the term up to interpretation and even debate. Indeed, experts such as Vaughan Robinson point out that “integration is a chaotic concept: a word used by many but understood differently by most.”<sup>50</sup> Experts have recognized this ambiguity in the definition of integration. Scholar Maja Korac, for example, differentiates between integration in the

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<sup>44</sup> Akram, “Palestinian Refugees and their Legal Status,” 44–45.

<sup>45</sup> Guy S. Goodwin-Gill, *The Refugee in International Law* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 7–8.

<sup>46</sup> Aguayo, Suhrke, and Zolberg, *Escape from Violence*, 28.

<sup>47</sup> Gatrell, *Modern Refugee*, 6; Akram, “Palestinian Refugees and their Legal Status,” 36.

<sup>48</sup> Susan C. Mapp, *Human Rights and Social Justice in a Global Perspective: An Introduction to International Social Work* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), accessed May 1, 2017, 76, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ebook-nps/reader.action?docID=415421>.

<sup>49</sup> David Cox and Manohar Pawar, *International Social Work: Issues, Strategies, and Programs* (London: Sage Publications, 2006), quoted in Kathleen Valtonen, *Social Work and Migration: Immigrant and Refugee Settlement and Integration* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), accessed December 1, 2016, 5–6, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ebook-nps/detail.action?docID=438968>.

<sup>50</sup> Vaughan Robinson, “Defining and Measuring Successful Refugee Integration,” in *ECRE International Conference on Integration of Refugees in Europe* (Brussels: ECRE, 1998): 118, quoted in Ager and Strang, “Understanding Integration,” 167.

refugee studies and integration in race relations literature.<sup>51</sup> Even the UNHCR, a leading authority on refugee issues, points out that much of the discussion in government and academic circles has centered on a wide understanding of integration.<sup>52</sup> Following Korac's observation, this literature review differentiates between the concept of integration in refugee studies and its treatment in race relations.

In race relations studies, integration represents "the process of change that occurs when two [different] cultures are forced to co-exist within one society."<sup>53</sup> Within this field of study, however, integration has a wide range of interpretations ranging from total assimilation into the host society to multiculturalism and cultural diversity. Nevertheless, the terms "integration," "assimilation," and "multiculturalism" have been often used interchangeably regardless of their different denotations. Scholars such as Irene Bloemraad, Anna Korteweg, and Gökçe Yurdakul have even mistakenly equated the terms by identifying them as synonyms.<sup>54</sup>

In its root origins, assimilation never intended to have its current implications. The 1951 UN Refugee Convention established the initial concept of assimilation in which both refugees and host societies are expected to adapt to each other; however, the term has become associated with refugees relinquishing their cultural characteristics to become a part of the host society.<sup>55</sup> Recognizing the implications, Barbara Harrell-Bond argues that refugees are unlikely "to accept the idea of permanent incorporation into the host

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<sup>51</sup> Maja Korac, "Integration and How We Facilitate It: A Comparative Study of the Settlement Experiences of Refugees in Italy and the Netherlands," *Sociology* 37, no. 1 (2003): 52, doi: 10.1177/0038038503037001387.

<sup>52</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *A New Beginning: Refugee Integration in Europe* (Geneva: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Bureau for Europe, September 2013), 13, <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/522980604.pdf>.

<sup>53</sup> Korac, "Integration and How We Facilitate It," 52.

<sup>54</sup> Irene Bloemraad, Anna Korteweg, and Gökçe Yurdakul, "Citizenship and Immigration: Multiculturalism, Assimilation, and Challenges to the Nation-State," *Annual Review of Sociology* 34, no. 1 (April 2008): 163, doi: 10.1146/annurev.soc.34.040507.134608.

<sup>55</sup> "The 1951 Refugee Convention," United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, accessed November 1, 2016, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/1951-refugee-convention.html>; Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees, *Investing in Our Communities: Strategies for Immigrant Integration* (Sebastopol, CA: Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees, 2006), 237, <https://www.gcir.org/sites/default/files/resources/GCIR%20Toolkit.pdf>.

society.”<sup>56</sup> Such early works as scholar Eisenstadt’s study on the absorption of the Jewish community in Palestine and Israel, however, focus on the aspect of refugee absorption in a larger society without exploring the adaptation of the host society. Eisenstadt divides the absorption process into four stages:

1. Acquisition of language, norms, and customs.
2. Acquisition of new skills to perform new roles and handle new situations.
3. Development of a new identity as a basis for personal adjustment.
4. Shift from participation in institutions of the smaller group to participation in the institutions of the host society.<sup>57</sup>

Policy makers thought that assimilation could eliminate the cultural differences and, thus, create a homogeneous society free of societal frictions. Analyzing assimilation in American life, Milton Gordon, distinguishes among three different models of assimilation:

1. Anglo-conformity: In a universal sense, the refugee accepts the dominant culture in the host community and becomes like the native.
2. Melting Pot: A widely known ideology of the assimilation concept is the melting pot theory in which both the native and the refugee fuse to form a supposedly better outcome. Gordon’s study on American society finds the melting pot idea embedded in the rhetoric of two U.S. presidents, Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, as a response to the increasing immigrant-receiving experience of the nation.
3. Cultural pluralism: Although the refugee acculturates to the dominant pattern especially for politics, work, and education, he preserves much of his culture and communal life.<sup>58</sup>

Despite these three different connotations, the term assimilation has become associated with a negative implication. Ager and Strang write that “ethno-cultural

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<sup>56</sup> Barbara E. Harrell-Bond, “Repatriation: Under What Conditions Is It the Most Desirable Solution for Refugees?,” *African Studies Review* 32, no.1 (April 1989): 51, ProQuest (1309730554).

<sup>57</sup> Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, *The Absorption of Immigrants: A Comparative Study Based Mainly on the Jewish Community in Palestine and the State of Israel* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1954), quoted in Barry N. Stein, “The Refugee Experience: Defining the Parameters of a Field of Study,” *International Migration Review* 15, no. 1/2 (1981): 329, doi: 10.2307/2545346.

<sup>58</sup> Milton M. Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 115-121.



political exclusion tends to be associated with ‘assimilation’ models of integration.”<sup>59</sup> Nowadays, liberal democracies condone notions of assimilation based on conformity and melting pot models.<sup>60</sup> Perhaps Spain is a rare occurrence where the conformity model still shapes an integration policy.<sup>61</sup> The international community, in general, refuses to insist on total assimilation, in which refugees are expected to become identical to the host community, as the model for integration.<sup>62</sup>

By and large, such integration experts as Stephen Castles, Maja Korac, Ellie Vasta, and Steven Vertovec stress that integration is predominantly a “two-way process” that “requires adaption on the part of the newcomer but also by the host society.”<sup>63</sup> The British interpretation of integration similarly favors cultural diversity over the narrow definition of assimilation.<sup>64</sup> In 1968, British Home Secretary Roy Jenkins stated that integration should be considered “not as a flattening process of uniformity, but as cultural diversity, coupled with equal opportunity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance.”<sup>65</sup> This interpretation of integration advocates the preservation of cultural and religious identities.

Nevertheless, arguments against cultural diversity often rest on the beliefs that multiculturalism reduces the integration of refugees and other immigrants.<sup>66</sup> Sir Trevor

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<sup>59</sup> Ager and Strang, “Understanding Integration,” 174–175.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Alexandra Fielden, “Local Integration: An Under-Reported Solution to Protracted Refugee Situations,” (Research Paper 158, New Issues in Refugee Research, Policy Development and Evaluation Services, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, June 2008), 2, <http://www.unhcr.org/486cc99f2.pdf>.

<sup>63</sup> Stephen Castles, Maja Kora, Ellie Vasta, and Steven Vertovec, *Integration: Mapping the Field* (UK Home Office Online Report No. 29/03) (Oxford: University of Oxford Centre for Migration and Policy Research and Refugee Studies Centre, 2002), 113, <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110218135832/http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/rdsolr2803.doc>.

<sup>64</sup> Rebecca J. Wright, “The Integration of Refugees: Towards a Fresh Approach” (undergraduate dissertation, Durham University, 2009), 8–9, [http://www.rapar.org.uk/uploads/4/6/8/7/4687542/2009\\_undergraduate\\_dissertation\\_-\\_the\\_integration\\_of\\_refugees.pdf](http://www.rapar.org.uk/uploads/4/6/8/7/4687542/2009_undergraduate_dissertation_-_the_integration_of_refugees.pdf).

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Pamela Irving Jackson and Peter Doerschler, “How Safe Do Majority Group Members, Ethnic Minorities, and Muslims Feel in Multicultural European Societies?” *Democracy and Security* 12, no. 4 (October 2016): 251, doi: 10.1080/17419166.2016.1213165.

Phillips, chair of the Commission of Racial Equality in the United Kingdom, believes that multiculturalism results in a fragmented society and disrupts the national collective solidarity.<sup>67</sup> Following the riots in the northwest of England in 2001, Phillips argues against state-sponsored multiculturalism, describing United Kingdom's society as being fragmented and "sleepwalking to segregation."<sup>68</sup> David Bates adds that refugees lack certain British values and, therefore, weaken the British national identity.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, he points out that homegrown terrorism raises new concerns about threats to national security posed by cultural diversity and lack of integration.<sup>70</sup>

As a result, recent British policies have shifted from favoring multiculturalism toward community cohesion by placing greater emphasis on the integration of minorities through citizenship, however, selecting only those suitable to be part of British society.<sup>71</sup> The political narrative leading up to Brexit centered on immigration and the threats posed by multiculturalism to the British national identity. Moreover, terrorist attacks in Europe with ties to refugees and other migrants fanned the resurgence of far-right wing groups such as the UK Independent Party (UKIP).<sup>72</sup>

### **C. THE CONCEPT OF INTEGRATION IN REFUGEE STUDIES**

In the context of refugee studies, scholars interpret integration in terms of its functional aspects. Harrell-Bond's straightforward definition highlights the importance of exploring the practical perspective of integration: "a situation in which host and refugee communities are able to coexist, sharing the same resources—both economic and

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<sup>67</sup> David Bates, "In It Together: Asylum, Multiculturalism and Grassroots Integration in Twenty-first Century Britain," *esharp*, Special Issue: The 1951 UN Refugee Convention – 60 Years On (2012): 114, [http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media\\_236292\\_en.pdf](http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_236292_en.pdf).

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 114; Alison Strang and Alastair Ager, "Refugee Integration: Emerging Trends and Remaining Agendas," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 23, no. 4 (December 2010): 593, doi: 10.1093/jrs/feq046.

<sup>72</sup> Jackson and Doerschler, "How Safe," 251.

social—with no greater mutual conflict than that which exists within the host community.”<sup>73</sup>

The growing concern over the increasing flow of refugees impels researchers to identify measures of refugees’ integration in a society.<sup>74</sup> The framework developed by Ager and Strang, as shown in Figure 2, outlines the foundation for various empirical studies on immigrants and refugees by identifying the key components of integration.<sup>75</sup>

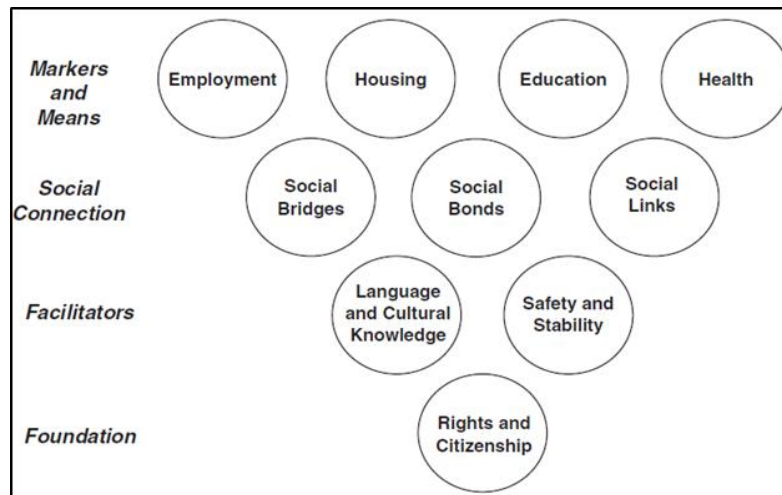


Figure 2. A Conceptual Framework Defining Core Domains of Integration.<sup>76</sup>

The framework groups the proposed key domains of integration into four overall categories:

1. Foundation: “Rights and Citizenship” afforded to refugees.
2. Facilitators of Integration: Refugees’ “Language and Cultural Knowledge” of the new host society.

<sup>73</sup> Sarah Dryden-Peterson and Lucy Hovil, “Local Integration as a Durable Solution: Refugees, Host Populations and Education in Uganda” (Working Paper No. 93, New Issues in Refugee Research, Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2003), 3, <http://www.unhcr.org/research/RESEARCH/3f8189ec4.pdf>.

<sup>74</sup> Korac, “Integration and How We Facilitate It,” 52.

<sup>75</sup> Ager and Strang, “Understanding Integration,” 169–170.

<sup>76</sup> Source: Ager and Strang, “Understanding Integration,” 169–170.

3. Social Connection: Ties within the refugee group – “Social Bonds;” connections with other communities – “Social Bridges;” ties with state structures – “Social Links.”
4. Markers and Means: Access to the education, employment, housing, and health sectors.<sup>77</sup>

The impact of citizenship in the integration process is debatable. In their proposed framework, Ager and Strang consider rights and citizenship the foundation for a successful integration process.<sup>78</sup> Similarly, Alexandra Fielden mentions that integration, in its narrow meaning, is considered a durable solution only when a refugee receives the citizenship of the host country. However, Fielden also points out that a broader understanding of integration suggests that at least “three distinct but inter-related legal, economic, and social and cultural dimensions ... are important for refugees’ ability to integrate successfully” without actually naturalizing refugees.<sup>79</sup> The study by Korac on Yugoslavian refugees in the Netherlands proves Fielden’s argument; acquiring Dutch citizenship was not sufficient for a complete and successful integration of these refugees.<sup>80</sup>

#### **D. REFUGEE INFLOWS AS A SOURCE OF CONFLICT**

Nowhere does the association between the broader category of immigrants and refugees diverge like it does in the discourse of securitization of migration. Immigrants do not enjoy the same admission rights of refugees. Reg Whitaker points out that all states agree that there is no right of immigration.<sup>81</sup> International law can positively influence the behavior of states toward immigration; however, states armed with national sovereignty claims choose which and how many may immigrate.

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<sup>77</sup> Ager and Strang, “Understanding Integration,” 166.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 169–170.

<sup>79</sup> Fielden, “Local Integration,” 1–2; “Conclusion on Local Integration No. 104 (LVI) – 2005,” United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/excom/exconc/4357a91b2/conclusion-local-integration.html>.

<sup>80</sup> Korac, “Integration and How We Facilitate It,” 58.

<sup>81</sup> Reg Whitaker, “Refugees: The Security Dimension,” *Citizenship Studies* 2, no. 3 (1998): 415, doi: 10.1080/13621029808420692.

Refugees, on the other hand, do not follow the same immigration regulations. States that have ratified the 1951 Convention concede to the legal obligations of accepting qualified applicants to the refugee status.<sup>82</sup> Of course, procedures ensure only those who are in need of protection receive asylum; however, these procedures may not conform to the state's own national criteria for admission.<sup>83</sup>

This humanitarian and legal commitment undermines the ability of receiving states to control who gets admitted to the country. In this context, refugees are portrayed as sources of fear and threats to national security. In their article, *Refugees and the Spread of Civil War*, Idean Salehyan and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch agree that the majority of refugees may never engage in direct violence; however, empirical analysis proves that "refugee flows may facilitate the transnational spread of arms, combatants, and ideologies conducive to conflict."<sup>84</sup> Salehyan and Gleditsch's argument complements Whitaker's assumption about host states moving toward control and exclusion of refugees to protect their national security.<sup>85</sup>

A widely debated topic nowadays addresses the possibility of refugees bringing their own conflicts to the new host countries. Zolberg, Suhrke, and Aguayo devised the term "refugee warrior" to refer to "highly conscious refugee communities with a political leadership structure and armed sections engaged in warfare for a political objective, be it to recapture the homeland, change the regime, or secure a separate state."<sup>86</sup> Interestingly, this definition does not attribute any socio-economic factors to the militarization of refugees.<sup>87</sup> Similarly, in the parallel research field of terrorism studies, scholars try to identify what drives individuals to violence. Among those who discredit socio-economic factors such as poverty is Princeton economist Alan Krueger. In his book exploring what

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<sup>82</sup> Whitaker, "Security Dimension," 415.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 416.

<sup>84</sup> Idean Salehyan and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, "Refugees and the Spread of Civil War," *International Organization* 60, no. 2 (2006): 335, doi: 10.1017/s0020818306060103.

<sup>85</sup> Whitaker, "Security Dimension," 414.

<sup>86</sup> Aguayo, Suhrke, and Zolberg, *Escape from Violence*, 275.

<sup>87</sup> Reinoud Leenders, "Refugee Warriors or War Refugees? Iraqi Refugees' Predicament in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon," *Mediterranean Politics* 14, no. 3 (2009): 345, doi: 10.1080/13629390903346848.

makes a terrorist, Krueger could not find empirical evidence relating material deprivation to terrorism.<sup>88</sup> In a similar vein, Lischer adds that the socio-economic conditions of refugee encampments have been given too much attention in explaining refugee violence.<sup>89</sup>

Alternatively, Lischer introduces an analysis framework that highlights the political dimensions that may lead to refugee-related violence. The proposed framework consists of three variables. The first variable is related to the origins of the refugee crisis. First, Lischer finds that refugees fleeing from ethnic or religious persecution in their home countries are more prone to engage in violence than refugees escaping general insecurities.<sup>90</sup> Second, Lischer discusses the role of receiving states in controlling the rise of refugee warriors. Host states whose interests align with those of the refugees or states that do not have the ability to stop militarism among refugees increase the refugees' tendency to use violence.<sup>91</sup> Finally, external factors, including humanitarian aid organizations, can tip the balance of power towards either the refugees or the sending country, thus inciting one or the other into violent actions.<sup>92</sup> These three factors, outlined by Lischer, can explain the increase in refugee militancy around the world.

While the majority of scholars argue that refugees diffuse conflicts across international borders, Andrew Shaver and Yang-Yang Zhou dispute this claim in their research, "Questioning Refugee Camps as Sources of Conflict."<sup>93</sup> They find evidence linking increased stability with refugee arrival, especially since the majority of refugees are civilians and children constitute more than half of refugees in the world.<sup>94</sup> Their results are consistent with viewpoints of humanitarian relief agencies who describe

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<sup>88</sup> Alan B. Krueger, *What Makes a Terrorist: Economics and the Roots of Terrorism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 9–10.

<sup>89</sup> Lischer, *Dangerous Sanctuaries*, 9.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 10–11.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> Andrew Shaver and Yang-Yang Zhou, "Questioning Refugee Camps as Sources of Conflict" (2015), 24, [https://scholar.princeton.edu/sites/default/files/ashaver/files/refugees\\_conflict\\_final.pdf](https://scholar.princeton.edu/sites/default/files/ashaver/files/refugees_conflict_final.pdf).

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

refugee communities consisting of vulnerable individuals. U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres, on the other hand, warns that “failing to provide help for Syrian refugees and their host countries could destabilize the entire region.”<sup>95</sup> Guterres realizes that there is certain limit to what these refugee communities can withstand.

The literature review exhibits a Western approach to the integration problem of refugees. Moreover, rarely does religion show up in scholars’ work either as hampering or promoting the integration process of refugees. Ignoring religion as a factor in the integration process of refugees seems counterintuitive in the Lebanese dilemma, where demographic balance is a major factor in the country’s stability. This thesis, therefore, fills the gap in the literature that results from a liberal view toward the integration of refugees.

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<sup>95</sup> “UNHCR Chief Warns That Syria Crisis at Dangerous Tipping Point, As Humanitarian Needs Outpace Funding,” United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, accessed December 6, 2016, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/latest/2015/3/551aa6736/unhcr-chief-warns-syria-crisis-dangerous-tipping-point-humanitarian-needs.html>.

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### III. ARMENIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON

The Armenian experience in Lebanon differs greatly from the situation of other minorities in the Arab states. Within a few decades after World War I, the close-knit Armenians transformed themselves from a detached and unintegrated refugee community to an indispensable constituent of modern Lebanon. Remarkably, the integration of the non-Arab Armenians within Lebanese society took place just as rising Arab nationalism swept the Middle Eastern countries. This successful integration defies some of the conventional arguments, especially the language barrier, made in contemporary research on refugee integration. Indeed, Armenian refugees in Lebanon, where many second and even third generation Armenians still speak “a crude colloquial Arabic,”<sup>96</sup> call into question the emphasis of current Western policies on language instruction as the key to the integration of refugees. Instead, the Lebanese confessional political system provided the opportunity for the Armenians to preserve and develop their own culture while participating fully in the country’s political life.

This chapter first traces the historical background of the Armenian presence in Lebanon. It then examines the international legal response to the Armenian refugee crisis. Later, the chapter outlines the legal status and rights of the Armenians in Lebanon before the discussion concludes by laying out the evolution of the Armenian identity in Lebanon.

#### A. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE ARMENIAN PRESENCE IN LEBANON

Although the 20th century witnessed the consolidation of the Armenian presence in Lebanon, Armenians had migrated to Lebanon “on a minor scale throughout the centuries since the Crusades.”<sup>97</sup> In the 17th century, the Lebanese Catholic Maronites

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<sup>96</sup> Jenny Phillimore, “Refugees, Acculturation Strategies, Stress and Integration,” *Journal of Social Policy* 40, no. 3 (July 2011): 576, doi: 10.1017/S0047279410000929; Richard G. Hovannisian, “The Ebb and Flow of the Armenian Minority in the Arab Middle East,” *Middle East Journal* 28, no. 1 (1974): 19, ProQuest (1290710288).

<sup>97</sup> Hratch Bedoyan, “The Social, Political and Religious Structure of the Armenian Community in Lebanon,” *Armenian Review* 32, no. 2 (June 1979): 120, ProQuest (1292245469).

provided refuge for persecuted Armenian Catholics from Anatolia.<sup>98</sup> With the support of the Lebanese Christian Maronites, these Armenian Catholics established the first Armenian community in Lebanon.<sup>99</sup> Their shared religious beliefs allowed the easy integration of Armenians, often through intermarriage with the native Christian Maronites, into the Lebanese society.

Around the year 1880, the first Apostolic Armenians settled in Lebanon by choice as entrepreneurs and students.<sup>100</sup> With the increasing Ottoman oppression in the 1890s, thousands of Armenian refugees found Lebanon, then a semi-autonomous Ottoman province under European protection, an appealing secure destination.<sup>101</sup> The influx of Apostolic Armenians overshadowed the Armenian Catholic presence.<sup>102</sup> The arrival of Apostolic Armenians introduced, in effect, a deviation from the previously established affiliation between Armenians and Maronites. Unlike their Catholic predecessors, these new settlers set themselves apart by creating schools and other social organizations focused on the preservation of the Armenian character—with the approval of the Lebanese Maronite leadership. Politically, Armenian nationalism witnessed a noticeable increase after the Armenian nationalist Dashnak Party established its Lebanese branch in Beirut.<sup>103</sup> Thus, when World War I started, the Armenian community, though only numbering a few thousand souls, had already found in Lebanon a hospitable environment for the fostering of Armenian ethnic and national consciousness.

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<sup>98</sup> The Lebanese Maronite community constitutes Lebanon's largest and most significant Christian sect. For a historical overview of the Maronite sect, see Simon Haddad, "The Maronite Legacy and the Drive for Preeminence in Lebanese Politics," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 22, no. 2 (10, 2002): 317–333, doi: 10.1080/1360200022000027294.

<sup>99</sup> Scott Abramson, "Lebanese Armenians; a Distinctive Community in the Armenian Diaspora and in Lebanese Society," *Levantine Review: The Journal of Near Eastern and Mediterranean Studies at Boston College* 2, no. 2 (2013): 189–190, ProQuest (1695203484).

<sup>100</sup> "The Armenian Apostolic Church—an independent offshoot of Monophysite Eastern Orthodox Church—was established in the fourth century A.D." Nikola B. Schahgaldian, "The Political Integration of an Immigrant Community into a Composite Society: The Armenians in Lebanon, 1920–1974" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1979), 72–75.

<sup>101</sup> Abramson, "Lebanese Armenians," 189–190.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

Although the presence of Armenians in Lebanon dates to well before the 20th century, the Lebanese Armenian community, numbering today around 100,000, grew out of the massive Armenian refugee waves in the first half of that century.<sup>104</sup> In particular, the expansion of the Armenian community began at the end of World War I when “approximately 40,000 Armenians settled in Beirut and the northern region of Mount Lebanon.”<sup>105</sup> The instability of the interwar period drove more Armenians to relocate to Lebanon. In 1922 and in exchange for Turkish acceptance of French control over Syria, France withdrew from occupied Cilicia, “the ancient Armenian kingdom in what is now southwestern Turkey.”<sup>106</sup> Fearing the resumption of persecution, many Cilician Armenians escaped to Lebanon.<sup>107</sup>

By 1926, the Armenian population in Lebanon was composed mainly of refugees. During the years 1929 and 1930, the majority of the Armenian population in Turkish Anatolia also fled to Lebanon.<sup>108</sup> Another big wave of refugees—nearly 15,000 Armenians—reached Lebanon between 1937 and 1939, after the French returned to Turkey its Alexandretta Sanjak region.<sup>109</sup> After the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, a final influx of approximately 5,000 Armenians came from Palestine into Lebanon.<sup>110</sup> During these first decades of the 20th century, Armenians found Lebanon an important factor in their survival as a community.

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<sup>104</sup> Arda Jebejian, “Patterns of Language Use among Armenians in Beirut in the Last 95 Years,” accessed April 26, 2017, 455, <http://www.haigazian.edu.lb/Publications/Documents/HARVol31fullcontent/453-469.pdf>.

<sup>105</sup> Ohannes Geukjian, “An Ignored Relationship: The Role of the Lebanese Armenian Diaspora in Conflict Resolution (1975–90),” *Middle Eastern Studies* 50, no. 4 (July 2014): 556, doi: 10.1080/00263206.2014.886570.

<sup>106</sup> Abramson, “Lebanese Armenians,” 191; Bedross Der Matossian, “The Armenians of Palestine 1918–48,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 41, no. 1 (October 2011): 29, doi: jps.2011.XLI.1.24.

<sup>107</sup> Abramson, “Lebanese Armenians,” 191.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Geukjian, “Ignored Relationship,” 556.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

## B. ARMENIAN REFUGEES IN INTERNATIONAL LAW

The experience of World War I raised public concern over the suffering of innocent civilians caught up in the war. The Allies, however, took timid actions to prosecute those who violated the laws and customs of war. Moreover, the Hague Convention of 1907 defined the concept of “war crimes” as violent acts committed by “a belligerent state against the soldiers or civilians of another state.”<sup>111</sup> This definition, though, did not include the crimes perpetrated in the Ottoman Empire against its Armenian minority. In the 1919 Preliminary Paris Peace Conference, the Commission on the Responsibilities of the Authors of War and on Enforcement of Penalties debated whether such acts constituted, instead of war crimes, “crimes against the laws of humanity.”<sup>112</sup> The participants at the Paris Peace Conference concluded that the concept of “laws of humanity” was too vague to have any significance in a court of law.<sup>113</sup> Behind this historic decision, however, lay the interests of the United States and Japan. For the American government facing the Bolshevik threat, Turkey represented a “potential ally that needed to be appeased.”<sup>114</sup>

The postwar diplomacy and division among the Allied powers contributed to the humanitarian disaster that accompanied the collapse and fragmentation of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>115</sup> The United States did not want to offer opportunities to a communist Russia by weakening the Turkish government further. Nonetheless, on August 19, 1920, the Allied powers and the Ottoman Empire concluded the Treaty of *Sèvres* with commitments to try Turkish officials.<sup>116</sup> The French and British demanded several provisions that promised the trial of persons responsible for the atrocities perpetrated

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<sup>111</sup> Bruno Cabanes, *The Great War and The Origins of Humanitarianism: 1918–1924*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 2.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Keith David Watenpaugh, “The League of Nations’ Rescue of Armenian Genocide Survivors and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism, 1920–1927,” *American Historical Review* 115, no. 5 (December 2010): 1316, ProQuest (851746069).

<sup>116</sup> Nikola B. Schahgaldian, “The Political Integration of an Immigrant Community into a Composite Society: The Armenians in Lebanon, 1920–1974” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1979), 45.

against the Armenians. Articles 226 and 230 of this treaty explicitly note the “crimes against humanity” committed by the Ottomans.<sup>117</sup> Under the stipulations of this treaty, victorious Allies also divided among them much of Ottoman territory and placed the rest under strict economic and military oversight. Out of parts of the Eastern and Southern Caucasus, the Allies even carved a new state for Armenians. Immediately thereafter, nationalist Turks challenged the French colonial forces, Greeks, and Armenians for the control of Anatolia.<sup>118</sup> Although Turkey signed the Treaty of Sèvres, legal ratification never followed. Turkish authorities only held a few trials to convict soldiers of violating simply the Turkish military code.<sup>119</sup> Under the pretense of protecting national sovereignty, the international community, therefore, failed to punish Turkish war criminals of World War I.

In addition to the creation of the “Republic Turkey in 1922” and “the absorption of Armenia into the Soviet Union,” the Turkish “armed resistance against the Western occupation” of Anatolia resulted in “the abrogation of the Treaty of Sèvres by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923.”<sup>120</sup> The Allies’ failure to ensure the implementation of the Treaty of Sèvres dealt the “final blow to Armenia” and the aspirations of Armenian refugees to go back to their homeland.<sup>121</sup> In addition, the Treaty of Lausanne granted amnesty to former Ottoman Empire officials previously found guilty of war crimes under the stipulations of the Treaty of Sèvres.<sup>122</sup> These new developments not only led to new waves of refugees but also made the displacement of Armenians into countries like Lebanon permanent and irreversible.<sup>123</sup> The superseding Treaty of Lausanne entitled Armenian refugees now living in Lebanon and other former Ottoman territories to

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<sup>117</sup> Cabanes, *Origins of Humanitarianism: 1918–1924*, 2.

<sup>118</sup> Watenpaugh, “Rescue of Armenian Genocide Survivors,” 1316.

<sup>119</sup> Cabanes, *Origins of Humanitarianism: 1918–1924*, 2.

<sup>120</sup> Watenpaugh, “Rescue of Armenian Genocide Survivors,” 1316.

<sup>121</sup> Abramson, “Lebanese Armenians,” 193.

<sup>122</sup> Cabanes, *Origins of Humanitarianism: 1918–1924*, 2.

<sup>123</sup> Watenpaugh, “Rescue of Armenian Genocide Survivors,” 1316.

citizenship in their host countries.<sup>124</sup> As a result, Armenian refugees came to realize “that their stay in Lebanon might not be as temporary as they had supposed.”<sup>125</sup>

Despite all the political setbacks in the aftermath of World War I, the fledgling League of Nations adopted a new policy favoring a humanitarian approach over a political solution to repair the damage inflicted by the war on Armenians.<sup>126</sup> According to Keith David Watenpugh, the League envisioned its mandate to embrace “remedying the injuries of the Armenians as a consequence of the war and Genocide.”<sup>127</sup> Along liberal Wilsonian lines, the League formulated its humanitarian operations, known collectively as the Rescue Movement, to reclaim Islamized Armenian women and children refugees.<sup>128</sup> The League’s efforts to settle Armenian refugees in Syria and Lebanon, as explained by Watenpugh, “were based on the concept of communal survival rather than of Assimilation.”<sup>129</sup> These early humanitarian initiatives following World War I would lay the groundwork for the evolution of international humanitarian and human rights law.

### C. LEGAL STATUS OF ARMENIANS IN LEBANON

On August 31, 1924, the French authorities granted Lebanese citizenship to all Armenian refugees in Lebanon in accordance with the Treaty of Lausanne between the Allies and Turkey.<sup>130</sup> The French policy of altering the status of Armenians in Lebanon emanates from France’s desire to pursue several strategic goals in the Middle East. Granting citizenship for Armenian refugees ensured their permanent separation from the newly establish Turkish country. The Treaty of Lausanne, therefore, appeased Turkey and legitimized the French rule over former Ottoman provinces. More importantly,

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<sup>124</sup> Abramson, “Lebanese Armenians,” 193.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Edita Gzoyan, “The League of Nations and Armenian Refugees. The Formation of the Armenian Diaspora in Syria,” *Central and European Review* 8, no. 1 (2014): 87, doi: 10.2478/caeer-2014-0004.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Watenpugh, “Rescue of Armenian Genocide Survivors,” 1318.

<sup>129</sup> Gzoyan, “League of Nations and Armenian Refugees,” 87.

<sup>130</sup> Geukjian, “Ignored Relationship,” 557.

France aspired to create a demographic Christian majority in Lebanon that would serve as a long-term ally in a largely Islamic region.<sup>131</sup>

This decision, however, prompted widespread public opposition from Muslim leaders, who accused France of bolstering the Christian majority in the newly established Greater Lebanon.<sup>132</sup> The opposing viewpoints sparked a heated debate in Lebanon's newspapers, as well as in the country's Representative Council, the predecessor of the Lebanese Parliament. Muslim deputies strongly protested the entry and naturalization of Armenians. The Christian Maronites, on the other hand, publicly supported the permanent settlement of Armenians in Lebanon.<sup>133</sup> Christian leaders headed by the Maronite Patriarch embraced the Armenians and even urged the Mandatory government to allocate more funds for the welfare of Armenian refugees.<sup>134</sup> The binding Christian identity formed the impetus of the Maronite's generosity towards the Armenians.

The integration of the Armenian community in Lebanon's political, economic, social system grew as a result of the opportunities afforded after they gained Lebanese citizenship. With their newly afforded citizenship, Armenians could work legally, own property, and move freely inside the country. The French, immediately thereafter, "reinforced and expanded the political spaces reserved for the Armenians in the new confessional system being established in Lebanon."<sup>135</sup> In 1929, the election of Abdullah Ishaq, the first Catholic Armenian in the Lebanese Parliament, as representative of the so-called minorities opened the door for the participation of Armenians in political life. The election of a Catholic Armenian, however, meant little to the emerging Dashnak leaders of the Apostolic Armenian majority.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Joanne Randa Nucho, "Becoming Armenian in Lebanon," *Middle East Report* 43, no. 2 (July 2013): 34, ProQuest (1417858035).

<sup>132</sup> Schahgaldian, "Armenians in Lebanon," 57.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> Ohannes Geukjian, "From Positive Neutrality to Partisanship: How and Why the Armenian Political Parties Took Sides in Lebanese Politics in the Post-Taif Period (1989-Present)," *Middle Eastern Studies* 45, no. 5 (September 2009): 740, doi: 10.1080/00263200903135554.

<sup>136</sup> Schahgaldian, "Armenians in Lebanon," 178.

The real steps toward Armenian participation in Lebanon's political life took place a few years later when a January 2, 1934 decree, first granted Apostolic Armenians the right to have their own elected deputy in the parliament.<sup>137</sup> Although the Armenian quota increased in consecutive Parliamentary elections, the Lebanese political system did not equate the Armenians with the other six predominant communities. After the civil war, however, the National Reconciliation Accord recognized the Armenians as "one of the seven main communities of the country rather than the seventh one," explains Hagop Pakradounian, the Armenian Dashnak MP elected in 2005.<sup>138</sup> Thus, after the 1990s, Armenians won an unprecedented total of seven seats in the Lebanese Parliament. The Taif Agreement, known as the National Reconciliation Accord, also guaranteed the Armenians a minimum of one ministerial post in any Cabinet.<sup>139</sup> On one hand, the legal rights obtained through citizenship facilitated their integration into the Lebanese politics. On the other, the Lebanese confessional system allowed Armenian leaders the adoption of a communalist strategy to ensure the needs of the Armenian community.

Nowadays, the Armenians of Lebanon constitute one of the most important Armenian communities in the world. Armenians understandably speak of Lebanon as their "second homeland."<sup>140</sup> Likewise, the Lebanese people exhibit warmth and sympathy with Armenians. During his incumbency from 1952 to 1958, Lebanese President Camille Chamoun amicably addressed the Armenians: "You should consider yourself in your own home, since it is without exaggeration when I say Lebanon is a second Armenia."<sup>141</sup> Nowhere else in the Arab states do the Armenians enjoy the same opportunities and benefits afforded to them by their stay in Lebanon. These freedoms on the political, economic, and communal autonomy level have distinguished Lebanon and its role in the Armenian diaspora.

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<sup>137</sup> Schahgaldian, "Armenians in Lebanon," 178..

<sup>138</sup> Geukjian, "From Positive Neutrality to Partisanship," 744.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Abramson, "Lebanese Armenians," 212.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 213.



#### D. ARMENIAN IDENTITY

Standing out as Lebanon's only community that is neither Arab nor primarily Arab-speaking, Armenians represent one unique element in Lebanon's "mosaic of minorities."<sup>142</sup> The preservation of a distinct Armenian identity—based on the memory of persecution and forced deportation—among new generations of Armenians constitutes one main function of Armenian organizations in Lebanon.<sup>143</sup> Armenian churches and schools have successfully promoted this national identity by teaching Armenian history and language.<sup>144</sup> The Armenian Church's pivotal role in the preservation of the Armenian identity transformed Lebanon into a spiritual hub for all the diaspora. In 1928, Beirut became central to the Armenian diaspora after the Armenian Catholic Church relocated its headquarters from Constantinople to Lebanon.<sup>145</sup> Similarly in 1930, the Catholicosate of Cilicia, the holy "see of the two preeminent pontiffs or Catholicoi in the Armenian Apostolic Church," moved to Lebanon where it "exercised jurisdiction over all the Apostolic Armenians of Lebanon, Syria, Jerusalem, and Cyprus."<sup>146</sup> Several carefully observed commemorations such as the Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day and Armenia's Independence Day passed the traumatic experience of the Genocide from Armenian refugees who first settled in Lebanon to subsequent generations. These ceremonies solidified the Armenian common national identity that hinges on the hope and aspirations of returning to the lost ancestral homeland.

During the years 1946 and 1947, the departure of 30,000 Armenians from Lebanon and Syria to Soviet Armenia best exemplifies this sense of temporary residency in Lebanon.<sup>147</sup> The Lebanese government, requiring departing Armenians to sell all their possessions, facilitated a demographic shift. Thousands of Muslim Shias from South

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<sup>142</sup> Abramson, "Lebanese Armenians," 206.

<sup>143</sup> Asbed Kotchikian, "Between (Home)land and (Host)land: Lebanese-Armenians and the Republic of Armenia," in *Armenians of Lebanon: From Past Princesses and Refugees to Present-Day Community*, ed. Aïda Boudjikianian (Beirut, Lebanon: Haigazian University, 2005), 465.

<sup>144</sup> Nucho, "Becoming Armenian," 35.

<sup>145</sup> Abramson, "Lebanese Armenians," 193.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Tsolin Nalbantian, "Fashioning Armenians in Lebanon, 1946–1958" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2011), 24, ProQuest (921291255).

Lebanon moved to Beirut to fill the sudden surplus in commercial and residential properties.<sup>148</sup> This internal displacement to the capital presented the Shias new economic opportunities. The migration of thousands of Armenians not only had an impact on the Lebanese identity but also strengthened the commitment of the remaining community to a united Armenian identity.

The internal linguistic, cultural, and religious diversity of the Armenian refugees, however, delayed the consolidation of a united Armenian identity.<sup>149</sup> In addition, Armenian refugees lived physically segregated, almost exclusively according to their regions of origin.<sup>150</sup> Still, Armenian leaders succeeded in cultivating a unified identity by portraying the development of the Armenian neighborhoods in Beirut simply as a resurrection of the Armenian community in a new location. Thus, Armenian neighborhoods in Lebanon bore the names of the residents' towns of origin.<sup>151</sup> Various Armenian political, cultural, and religious organizations also cooperated to promote a united Armenian identity.<sup>152</sup> Through the joint efforts of these organizations, the diverse and fragmented sub-identities of Armenian refugees in Lebanon forged a unified national consciousness and identity.

For refugees, whose lives are in a “constant physical, social, moral, and cultural flux,” the notion of identity as a solid and fixed concept typically hinders their ability to integrate in a new society. Despite the discernible preservation of the Armenian identity, several studies show the tendency of the Armenian community in Lebanon to borrow from the Arab Christian culture. These developments to the Armenian identity eased their integration and prosperity in their new environment. Several indications confirm that the Armenian community in Lebanon is growing more like the majority culture. In 1958, the involvement of the Lebanese-Armenians in intra-communal violence suggests that the community was not isolated but, in fact, integrated within the socio-political fabric of

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<sup>148</sup> Nalbantian, “Fashioning Armenians,” 24.

<sup>149</sup> Nucho, “Becoming Armenian,” 34.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> Kotchikian, “Between (Home)land and (Host)land,” 470.

Lebanon.<sup>153</sup> The Armenians, like other Lebanese factions, participated in the fighting resulting from existing religious and political tensions in the country. In 1973, professors from the American University in Beirut compared the scores of two groups of university students, Lebanese Arab Christians and Lebanese Armenians, on a standardized questionnaire that measured 15 different personality characteristics. The test taken by similar groups of subjects in 1956 showed that Lebanese Armenians differed from the Lebanese Arab Christians on ten out of the 15 variables.<sup>154</sup> Figure 3 summarizes the occurring change during this period of 17 years. While both groups had evolved from 1956 to 1973, the scores indicated a greater transformation among Armenians in the direction of the Lebanese Arab Christians.

Personality Variable	1956	1973
Achievement	L	N
Deference	N	N
Order	H	N
Exhibitionism	H	L
Autonomy	N	N
Affiliation	N	N
Intracception	L	N
Succorence	H	N
Dominance	L	L
Abasement	N	N
Nurturance	L	N
Change	L	N
Endurance	L	N
Heterosexuality	N	N
Aggression	L	N

H stands for Armenians Scoring Higher than Lebanese Christian Arabs

L stands for Armenians Scoring Lower than Lebanese Christian Arabs

N stands for No Difference between the groups

Figure 3. Personality Variables and the Relative Performance of the Lebanese Armenian and Lebanese Christian Arab Groups in 1956 and 1973.<sup>155</sup>

<sup>153</sup> Kotchikian, "Between (Home)land and (Host)land," 470.

<sup>154</sup> Agop Der-Karabetian and Levon Melikian, "Assimilation of Armenians in Lebanon," *The Armenian Review* 27, no. 1 (Spring 1974): 67–69, ProQuest (1292279981).

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

In 1973, Armenian university students, therefore, resembled more their Arab Christian counterparts than they did in 1956. Figure 4 explains the personality variables used in the survey.

Achievement	To do one's best, to be successful, to accomplish something of great significance, to do a difficult job well, to be able to do things better than others, to be a recognized authority.
Deference	To get suggestions from others, to follow instructions and do what is expected, to praise others, to conform to custom and avoid the unconventional, to let other make decision.
Order	To make plans before starting on a difficult task, to have things organized, to keep things neat and orderly, to organize details of work, to have things arranged so that they run smoothly without change.
Exhibition	To say witty and clever things, to talk about personal adventures and experiences, to be noticed by others, to be the center of attention, to ask questions others cannot answer.
Autonomy	To be able to come and go as desired, to be independent of others in making decision to do things that are unconventional, to do things without regard to what others may think, to criticize those in position of authority.
Affiliation	To be loyal to friends, to participate in friendly groups, to make as many friends as possible, to do things with friends rather than alone, to form strong attachments.
Intracception	To analyze one's motives and feelings, to put one's self in another's place, to judge people by why they do things rather by what they do, to analyze the behavior of others.
Succorence	To seek help and encouragement from others, to receive a great deal of affection from others, to be helped by others when depressed, to have others feel sorry when one is sick.
Dominance	To argue for one's point of view, to be a leader and be regarded so by others, to make group decisions, to settle arguments and disputes between others, to tell others how to do their jobs.
Abasement	to feel guilty when one does something wrong, to feel the need for punishment for wrong doing, to feel better when giving in and avoiding a fight then when having one's own way, to feel inferior.
Nurturance	To help friends when they are in trouble, to forgive others, to do small favors for others, to sympathize with others who are sick, to show great deal of affection toward others.
Change	To do new and different things, to meet new people, to experience novelty and change in daily routine, to eat in new and different places, to move about the country and live in different places, to participate in new fads and fashions.
Endurance	To keep at a job until it is finished, to work hard at a task, to keep at a puzzle or problem until it is solved, to put in long hours of work without distraction, to avoid being interrupted while at work.
Heterosexuality	To go out with members of the opposite sex, to engage in social activities with the opposite sex, to kiss those of the opposite sex, to be considered physically attractive by those of the opposite sex, to listen to or to tell jokes involving sex.
Aggression	To attack contrary points of view, to criticize others publicly, to make fun of others, to tell others off when disagreeing with them to get revenge for insults, to blame others when things go wrong, to become angry.

Figure 4. Personality Variables.<sup>156</sup>

After the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war in 1975, the determination of the Armenian community to stay in the country consolidated the changing nature of their identity to include a sense of belonging to Lebanon. During this war, the Armenian leaders adopted what they called a “positive neutrality” policy “to steer clear of

<sup>156</sup> Source: Der-Karabetian and Melikian, “Assimilation of Armenians,” 69.

partisanship with any of the warring Lebanese parties and avoid potential Armenian intra-communal violence.”<sup>157</sup> Interestingly, the Armenians refused to support the Christians. Scholars Aghop Der-Karabetian and Armine Proudian-Der-Karabetian report that “some Arab Christians [in Lebanon] regarded the Armenian posture as an open betrayal of trust developed over a number of decades.”<sup>158</sup> Others used the positive neutrality policy as evidence of Armenians being “outsiders” because they did not take any sides in the conflict: “They have a kind of double allegiance. Not once in their political history in Lebanon have they behaved as Lebanese first. They always behave as Armenians first and then Lebanese.”<sup>159</sup>

Similarly, in a defamatory speech Lebanese President Bachir Gemayel, then leader of Christian armed militias, accused the Armenians of ingratitude and even betrayal: “We opened our hearts to them ... we never made them feel as foreigners in Lebanon ... but these actions were not mutual ... when time came to pay a blood tax”; the Armenians refused to return the favor.<sup>160</sup> The Armenians, however, played an important role in mediating between the various religious and political parties. Thus, by adopting the positive neutrality attitude, Armenians gained the important trust of Muslims in Lebanon.

Few considered that the neutral stance demonstrated devotion and stronger ties between Armenians and Lebanon. At least, they refused to participate in the destruction of the country and jeopardize their position. The civil war, however, reinforced their distinct identity. According to one study, the inter-communal violence in Lebanon “has sensitized the Armenian community to its differentiation from other groups, rigidified its ethnic boundaries,” and increased its in-group allegiance.<sup>161</sup> The study concluded that a

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<sup>157</sup> Geukjian, “From Positive Neutrality to Partisanship,” 743.

<sup>158</sup> Aghop Der-Karabetian and Armine Proudian-Der-Karabetian, *Ethnicity and Civil War: The Lebanese-Armenian Case* (La Verne, CA: University of La Verne, 1984), 18.

<sup>159</sup> Kotchikian, “Between (Home)land and (Host)land,” 470; Stephen K. Hindy, “Lebanon Armenians Fighting for Survival: Clannishness Tends to Make Them a Vulnerable Minority during Strife,” *Los Angeles Times* (1923-Current File), November 8, 1979, j3.

<sup>160</sup> Abramson, “Lebanese Armenians,” 209.

<sup>161</sup> Der-Karabetian and Proudian-Der-Karabetian, *The Lebanese-Armenian Case*, 18.

solidified Armenian identity, however, “is not necessarily associated with lower Lebanese national sentiments.”<sup>162</sup>

The declaration of Armenia’s independence on September 21, 1991, signaled a new reality that the Armenian community in Lebanon had to face. The reemergence of the independent Armenia, which coincided with the end of the Lebanese civil war, transformed the “homeland” from a symbolic concept into an actual existence.<sup>163</sup> These developments formed the ultimate test to the Armenians in Lebanon. In 1988, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Soviet Armenia and neighboring Azerbaijan had already symbolized the importance of territory in the identity-making process of the Armenians in Lebanon. In Armenian-populated neighborhoods in Lebanon, posters and pamphlets announcing “Karabakh belongs to Armenia” became a common sight. Even as the final rounds of the Lebanese civil war were still ranging, Armenians would gather to watch recorded videotapes from Soviet Armenian television about the ongoing clashes in the Armenian enclave of Soviet Azerbaijan.<sup>164</sup> This period of identity negotiation between the homeland and Lebanon ended with the maturation of a hybrid Lebanese-Armenian identity. Thus, the duality between Armenian and Lebanese identity empowers the Armenian community without preventing its members from feeling “100% Armenians and 100% Lebanese at the same time.”<sup>165</sup>

## **E. CONCLUSION**

The preservation of a distinct Armenian identity was, and still is, of paramount importance to Armenians living in Lebanon. Works like that of Lebanese Armenian poet Mushegh Ishkhan’s “Lebanon: The Central Fortress of Culture in the Diaspora” even praise the distinctiveness of the Armenian community in Lebanon vis-à-vis the Armenian diaspora.<sup>166</sup> The Lebanese confessional political system, even with all its weaknesses, offered the Armenians this much-desired opportunity to protect their culture. By pushing

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<sup>162</sup> Der-Karabetian and Proudian-Der-Karabetian, *The Lebanese-Armenian Case*, 18.

<sup>163</sup> Kotchikian, “Between (Home)land and (Host)land,” 472.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 472–474.

<sup>165</sup> Abramson, “Lebanese Armenians,” 199.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 201.

Lebanese citizenship for Armenians to bolster the numbers of Christians in Lebanon, France laid the groundwork for the integration of Armenian refugees. Religion, however, did not stop the Armenians from reaching out to Lebanese Muslims even during the civil war. The “positive neutrality” policy adopted during the civil war best exemplifies the important role of the Armenians in the reconciliation of different Lebanese groups.

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## **IV. PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON**

Despite the cultural similarity between Palestinians and Lebanese, the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon find themselves living in isolation from the rest of the population. The Lebanese, segregated by sectarian and political affiliation, do not constitute a homogenous community, yet unanimously agree to exclude Palestinians from the mainstream Lebanese society. On one hand, the integration of Palestinian refugees threatens Lebanon's political stability, which is based on a delicate balance among the different religious sects. On the other, the alignment of Lebanese and Palestinian views toward Israel requires the preservation of the Palestinians' right of return to the lost homeland. Therefore, any effort to ease the condition of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon bizarrely constitutes a betrayal to the Palestinian cause. Without the necessary legal rights to participate in the social, economic, and political life, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon drift into a self-feeding loop of isolation.

This chapter first traces the history of the Palestinian presence in Lebanon. It then examines the international legal response to the Palestinian refugee crisis. Later, the chapter outlines the legal status and rights of the Palestinians in Lebanon before the discussion ends by laying out the evolution of the Palestinian identity and its role in restraining the integration of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

### **A. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN LEBANON**

The Palestinian refugee problem remains "one of the intractable components of the Arab-Israeli conflict" that directly affects Lebanon.<sup>167</sup> The formation of Israel and the subsequent 1948 Arab-Israeli war rendered thousands of Palestinians homeless.<sup>168</sup> During this early period of the conflict, approximately 128,000 Palestinian refugees

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<sup>167</sup> Simon Haddad, "Sectarian Attitudes as a Function of the Palestinian Presence in Lebanon," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 22, no. 3 (2000): 81, ProQuest (220602951).

<sup>168</sup> Cheryl A. Rubenberg, "Palestinians in Lebanon: A Question of Human and Civil Rights," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 6 (July 1984): 196, ProQuest (59337075).

poured into neighboring southern Lebanon.<sup>169</sup> This group of people and their descendants, today numbering 449,957, are registered with UNRWA in Lebanon.<sup>170</sup> Given the voluntary nature of registration and the massive migration of Palestinian refugees from Lebanon, this figure is only partially relevant when trying to identify the total number of Palestinians currently residing in the country.<sup>171</sup>

Following the first Arab-Israeli war, three other events consolidated the Palestinian presence in Lebanon: the 1967 Six-Day War between Israel and a coalition of Arab states, the 1970 “Black September” confrontation between Jordanian governmental forces and the Palestinian resistance organizations, and the ongoing conflict in Syria. After the military defeat of front line Arab regimes in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and the occupation of additional Palestinian territories by Israel, 360,000 Palestinians forcefully relocated to neighboring countries, including Lebanon.<sup>172</sup> Most of the Palestinians who moved to Lebanon during this period, however, were not eligible to register with UNRWA.<sup>173</sup> Another group of Palestinian refugees who also did not register with UNRWA, and therefore are not included in UNRWA’s figures, arrived into Lebanon after Jordanian authorities attacked their camps in retaliation for Palestinian military activities in Jordan.<sup>174</sup>

Ultimately, this confrontation resulted in the relocation of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) power base to Lebanon.<sup>175</sup> After the Syrian conflict started in March 2011, UNRWA noticed the increased relocation of Palestine refugees

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<sup>169</sup> Rubenberg, “Palestinians in Lebanon,” 198.

<sup>170</sup> Where We Work: Lebanon,” United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine in the Near East.

<sup>171</sup> Jad Chaaban et al., *Survey on the Socioeconomic Status of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon 2015* (Beirut: American University of Beirut and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, 2016), 23, <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=11305>; Nawaf A. Salam, “Between Repatriation and Resettlement: Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 24, no. 1 (1994): 19, ProQuest (59678321).

<sup>172</sup> Haddad, *Palestinian Impasse*, 27.

<sup>173</sup> Rubenberg, “Palestinians in Lebanon,” 198.

<sup>174</sup> Salam, “Between Repatriation and Resettlement,” 19.

<sup>175</sup> Haddad, *Palestinian Impasse*, 27.

from Syria (PRS) to Lebanon. More than 53,070 PRS are estimated to have entered Lebanon during the first years of the Syrian conflict.<sup>176</sup> In May 2014, however, Lebanese authorities implemented new measures to restrict their entry at the borders. The comprehensive headcount carried out by UNRWA confirms that, by December 2016, the number of PRS registered with UNRWA in Lebanon has decreased to 32,000.<sup>177</sup>

The absence of reliable statistics has generated a wide range of conflicting speculation and estimates of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.<sup>178</sup> Both the Palestinians and Lebanese authorities, though for different reasons, are inclined to adopt the highest estimates. In a bid for international sympathy, Palestinians tend to inflate their numbers to secure more humanitarian aid. The Lebanese authorities might also exaggerate their estimates to support their argument of Lebanon's inability to absorb the Palestinian refugees without having massive repercussions to the Lebanese society. In 1994, for example, the Lebanese foreign minister estimated that some 400,000 to 500,000 Palestinians resided in Lebanon.<sup>179</sup> The Israelis, on the other hand, tend to adopt lower estimates to downgrade the importance of the Palestinian refugee problem in the Arab world.<sup>180</sup> Despite the widely divergent estimates, a 2010 survey by the American University of Beirut pinpoints that, in addition to the Palestinian refugees who recently relocated from Syria, between 260,000 and 280,000 Palestinians are actual residents in Lebanon.<sup>181</sup>

The lands that were temporarily designated to shelter the refugees after the first Arab-Israeli war have evolved over the years into permanent homes to the Palestinians. After more than six decades, a large percentage of the Palestinians in Lebanon still live in the remaining 12 UNRWA-registered camps in the country shown in Figure 5. This 62

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<sup>176</sup> Chaaban et al., *Socio-economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees*, 25.

<sup>177</sup> "PRS in Lebanon," United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, accessed April 26, 2017, <https://www.unrwa.org/prs-lebanon>.

<sup>178</sup> Salam, "Between Repatriation and Resettlement," 19.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 19–20.

<sup>181</sup> Chaaban et al., *Socio-economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees*, 24.

percent constitutes the highest proportion of refugees in the world residing in camps.<sup>182</sup> The remaining 38 percent live in enclaves, mainly in the camp vicinity, that grew out of the displacements during the civil war.<sup>183</sup>



Figure 5. Official UNRWA Camps in Lebanon.<sup>184</sup>

Nowadays, Palestinian camps are scattered all across Lebanon near major cities, as well as agricultural and industrial areas. In the early years, however, Palestinian refugees first settled in camps in southern Lebanon before moving to other allocated spaces.<sup>185</sup> When the Palestinian refugee crisis first began, the international community

<sup>182</sup> Ibid, x.

<sup>183</sup> Chaaban et al., *Socio-economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees*, x.

<sup>184</sup> Roberts, *Refugees Living with Long-term Displacement*, 97.

<sup>185</sup> Rami Siklawi, "The Dynamics of Palestinian Political Endurance in Lebanon," *Middle East Journal* 64, no. 4 (October 2010): 599, doi: 10.3751/64.4.15.

was not yet equipped to deal with the mass displacement of people. The Lebanese government, with the help of the Red Cross and religious authorities, provided assistance to the incoming refugees until the United Nations could secure financial and practical aid.<sup>186</sup>

The Palestinian camps in Lebanon are considered “closed spaces” or islands located at the urban periphery. They have poor access, poor housing, and inadequate green spaces.<sup>187</sup> Compounding the already difficult living conditions, the subsequent arrival of additional PRS increased the pressure on the waning infrastructure and services within the camps.<sup>188</sup> A study conducted jointly by UNRWA and the American University of Beirut indicates that space is a major factor contributing to the social exclusion of Palestinians in Lebanon.<sup>189</sup> This study compares several Palestinian communities living in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Gaza Strip, and the West Bank and confirms that the socio-economic situation of Palestinian refugees living within the “camps ... is worse than that of those living outside the camps.”<sup>190</sup> As shown in Figure 6, Palestinian refugees living in “closed spaces” are generally poorer than the local population.

Country/region	Discrimination in labor market	Governance body	Type of camp	Rate of poverty compared to local rate	
Egypt	Yes	--	No camps	⇒	Similar
Syria	No	State-centred and strong	Open space	⇒	Similar
Jordan	No	State-centred and strong	Open space	⇒	Similar
Gaza Strip	No	Strong	Semi closed space	⇒	Slightly higher
West Bank	No	Relatively weak	Closed space	⇒	Higher
Lebanon	Yes	Very weak	Closed space	⇒	Higher

Figure 6. Relationship between the Poverty Rate, Type of Camp, and Discrimination in the Labor market.<sup>191</sup>

<sup>186</sup> Roberts, *Refugees Living with Long-term Displacement*, 76.

<sup>187</sup> Chaaban et al., *Socio-economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees*, 5.

<sup>188</sup> Chaaban et al., *Survey on the Economic Status of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon*, 8.

<sup>189</sup> Chaaban et al., *Socio-economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees*, 5.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>191</sup> Chaaban et al., *Socio-economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees*, 6.

In Lebanon, the situation is worse because of the discrimination in the labor market against Palestinians.

The prevailing Lebanese perception of the Palestinian refugee camps is that they are zones of lawlessness within Lebanese sovereignty.<sup>192</sup> Since Lebanese security forces do not enter the camps except to control the legal exits and entrances to the Palestinian camps, this view is understandable.<sup>193</sup> Unlike Jordan, over the course of the civil war, Lebanon was unable to curb Palestinian military activities and witnessed security threats arising from the militarization of refugees. According to Lischer, one of the factors that explain the spread of civil wars arising from refugee flows is the receiving state's ability to control militarism among refugees.<sup>194</sup>

On the other hand, other scholars such as Muhammad Ali Khalidi and Diane Riskedahl argue that the Palestinian "camps are not the only parts of the country that have witnessed the occasional violent flareup."<sup>195</sup> This attempted justification of criminal activity and harboring of terrorists within the camps by alluding to other violent events in the country undermines the security of both the Palestinians and the Lebanese people. When fighting broke out in the Palestinian Nahr Al Barid camp on May 20, 2007, between the Lebanese Army and the terrorists who trained and lived within the refugee camp, 30,000 Palestinians suffered the consequences of the destruction of their homes.<sup>196</sup>

## **B. PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN INTERNATIONAL LAW**

In the early years of the conflict, the Palestinians expected the international community to restore their rights.<sup>197</sup> Although they were presented with several

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<sup>192</sup> Muhammad Ali Khalidi and Diane Riskedahl, "The Road to Nahr Al-Barid: Lebanese Political Discourse and Palestinian Civil Rights," *Middle East Report* 37, no. 3 (October 2007): 27, ProQuest (58767076).

<sup>193</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *The Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon* (Geneva: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, February 2016), 5, <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/56cc95484.pdf>.

<sup>194</sup> Lischer, *Dangerous Sanctuaries*, 9-11.

<sup>195</sup> Khalidi and Riskedahl, "Road to Nahr Al-Barid," 29.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> Haddad, "Sectarian Attitudes," 81.

resettlement schemes, the Palestinians rejected all offers because such schemes would result in the refugees having to give up their claims to Palestine. Several months after the creation of the state of Israel, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution that guarantees Palestinian refugees' right of return or compensation as a basis for the solution of the problem. Resolution 194

resolves that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live in peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss or damage to property which, under principles of international law, or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible.<sup>198</sup>

Despite being undoubtedly the most significant piece of international legislation on Palestinian refugees, resolution 194 could not be implemented.<sup>199</sup> When the international community failed to reach a political solution, the international response to the refugee crisis shifted its focus on improving the conditions of Palestinian refugees in host countries. The concentration on the humanitarian aspect of the crisis gained precedence when the UN General Assembly established UNRWA on December 8, 1949, to assist Palestinian refugees in the food, shelter, education, and health services.<sup>200</sup>

The efforts undertaken by the international community to solve the Palestinian refugee crisis were not original. The UN was already engaged in finding a solution to the Europeans displaced by World War II, and just few days before establishing UNRWA, the UN General Assembly had established the UNHCR by adopting resolution 319 (IV).<sup>201</sup> On July 28, 1951, the first international refugee treaty, "Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees," was signed in Geneva.<sup>202</sup> The 1951 Convention, unlike UNRWA's focus on Palestine refugees, is universal and applies to all those who became

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<sup>198</sup> Rubenberg, "Palestinians in Lebanon," 196.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Haddad, "Sectarian Attitudes," 81.

<sup>201</sup> Are Knudsen, "The Law, the Loss and the Lives of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon" (CMI Working Paper, Chr. Michelsen Institute, Norway, 2007), 3, <https://www.cmi.no/publications/file/2607-the-law-the-loss-and-the-lives-of-palestinian.pdf>.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

refugees before January 1, 1951. The Arab states, on the other hand, feared that including the Palestinian refugees within the 1951 Convention would dilute their cause. Therefore, they proposed an amendment to exclude the refugees already under support from UNRWA. The same states, including Lebanon, however, that fought for the amendment to preserve the right of Palestinians, neither signed the 1951 Convention nor ratified it.<sup>203</sup>

### C. LEGAL STATUS OF PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON

Palestinian refugees have settled in Lebanon for more than 60 years, yet they hold a dubious legal position that contributes to their isolation from the Lebanese economic, political, and social structures.<sup>204</sup> In theory, the international conventions that are officially recognized by Lebanon define the legal position of Palestinians in Lebanon. In practice, however, the Lebanese “sympathy and official support” for the Palestinian cause does not translate into a practical and legal framework protecting the individual rights of Palestinians.<sup>205</sup> Based on their legal status and registration with UNRWA, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon can be divided into four categories:

1. “Registered” refugees, also known as “Palestine refugees,” who are registered with UNRWA and the Lebanese Department of Political and Refugees Affairs (DPRA);
2. “Non-registered” Palestinian refugees, who are only registered with the Lebanese authorities have limited access to UNRWA’s services. Their estimated population is around 35,000;
3. “Non-ID” Palestinian refugees, who are estimated to be between 3,000 to 5,000 neither registered with UNRWA nor with the Lebanese authorities; and
4. Palestine refugees from Syria, who arrived to Lebanon after 2011 and the Syrian conflict.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Knudsen, “Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon,” 3.

<sup>204</sup> Souheil al-Natour, “The Legal Status of Palestinians in Lebanon,” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 10, no. 3 (September 1997): 360, Proquest (59779547).

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*, 2-4; Finnish Immigration Service, *Syrian and Palestinian (in Lebanon and Exiting Syria) Refugees in Lebanon* (Helsinki: Country Information Service of the Finnish Immigration Service, September 2016), 6, [http://www.migri.fi/download/70079\\_Report\\_Refugees\\_final.pdf?267e9960c55bd488](http://www.migri.fi/download/70079_Report_Refugees_final.pdf?267e9960c55bd488).



Under the pretense of Lebanese sovereignty, Lebanese authorities issued several necessary laws to regulate the Palestinian presence in Lebanon. Adhering to the principle of sovereignty of each state to deal with its internal affairs, the international community also did not grant the UNRWA any powers to guarantee the security and legal rights of the Palestinian refugees in host countries. In December 1982, the Lebanese government insisted that the protection of the refugees was its responsibility: “Palestinians legally residing in Lebanese territory are under the protection of Lebanese law, as are Lebanese nationals and all foreigners legally residing in Lebanon.”<sup>207</sup> This responsibility, however, does not extend to any of the humanitarian dimension assigned to UNRWA: “It must be made clear that the host Arab States are not ready to accept or to take over any of the UNRWA responsibilities, including education.”<sup>208</sup>

Reluctant to adopt “any plan that could be interpreted as encouraging resettlement,” the Arab states insist on providing hospitality and protection on a temporary basis until a solution is found for the refugee problem.<sup>209</sup> Furthermore, because of the dependency culture among refugees on international aid that was encouraged by UNRWA’s activities, any decline in UNRWA services in Lebanon can signal signs of abandonment by the international community. The Lebanese authorities fear that the decrease in international aid for the Palestinians would come at the expense of a solution that involves their permanent settlement in Lebanon. In this context, the deteriorating situation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon can only lead to an increase in discriminatory laws under the guise of protecting Palestinians’ right of return that is aimed to deny their ability to integrate within the Lebanese society. Such laws encourage Palestinians to leave Lebanon by applying “restrictive policies with regard to the social, economic, and civil rights of Palestinians.”<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> Rubenberg, “Palestinians in Lebanon,” 197.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

<sup>209</sup> Haddad, *Palestinian Impasse*, 25.

<sup>210</sup> Chaaban et al., *Socio-economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees*, 6.

One of the few areas of common ground between the various Lebanese political parties is their objection to granting citizenship for the Palestinians.<sup>211</sup> The 1989 National Reconciliation Accord, Taif Agreement, signed at the end of the civil war explicitly rejected the permanent settlement of Palestinians in Lebanon: “there shall be no fragmentation, partition, or settlement of non-Lebanese in Lebanon.”<sup>212</sup> Lebanese Christian President Emile Lahoud emphasizes this point while addressing Beirut community leaders: “We cannot accept a settlement without ... the sacred right of return of Palestinian refugees to their land.”<sup>213</sup> Even the Sunnis in Lebanon, who theoretically would gain the most from naturalizing the predominantly Sunni Palestinian refugees, opposed any permanent settlement because it contradicts the Palestinian’s right of return.<sup>214</sup> Strikingly, the Lebanese Shias expressed similar views: “First, regarding resettlement plans, we are with the rest of the Lebanese and with the rest of the Palestinians in rejecting resettlement plans although the Palestinians are our dear brothers.”<sup>215</sup>

Nevertheless, Lebanese authorities naturalized many Palestinians over the course of the years. Approximately 50,000 Palestinian refugees, mostly Christians, received Lebanese citizenship during the 1950s and 1960s “to counter the rapidly growing Muslim population.”<sup>216</sup> In 1994, the Lebanese authorities granted citizenship to another 27,000 Muslim Palestinian refugees, mostly Shia residents in southern Lebanon. The others were Sunni Palestinians, probably naturalized “to balance out the Shia naturalization.”<sup>217</sup> Few remaining Palestinian Christians then received Lebanon citizenship after the Maronites protested the naturalization of Muslim Palestinians.<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> Chaaban et al., *Socio-economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees*, 7.

<sup>212</sup> Knudsen, “Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon,” 5

<sup>213</sup> Simon Haddad, “The Origins of Popular Opposition to Palestinian Resettlement in Lebanon.” *International Migration Review* 38, no. 2 (2004): 471, ProQuest (60299301).

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> Haddad, “Popular Opposition to Palestinian Resettlement,” 477–478; Marvine Howe, “Palestinians in Lebanon.” *Middle East Policy* 12, no. 4 (January 2005): 150, ProQuest (36504703).

<sup>217</sup> Haddad, “Popular Opposition to Palestinian Resettlement,” 478.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

With the exception of these uncommon occurrences of naturalization of Palestinian refugees, the Lebanese government fiercely opposes granting citizenship to Palestinians. Without Lebanese citizenship, Palestinians are considered foreigners and, therefore, “excluded from several laws reserved for Lebanese citizens.”<sup>219</sup> Since Lebanese consider the Palestinians no different from any other foreigners residing within Lebanon’s boundaries, Lebanese legislation concerning the Palestinian refugees reflects that view in the following sectors: residency rights, the right to work, the right to education, the right to own property, and citizenship rights.<sup>220</sup>

The treatment of Palestinian residency in Lebanon continues to be equated with that of “foreigners, albeit of a ‘special kind’” after a revision to the original law that governs foreigners’ entry to, residency in, and exit from Lebanon to accommodate the Palestinians.<sup>221</sup> A law promulgated in 1995 codified Lebanon’s extreme measures to reduce the Palestinian presence in Lebanon.<sup>222</sup> In that same year, 5,000 Palestinian refugees from Lebanon were working abroad in Libya.<sup>223</sup> Deliberately timed to coincide with Libya’s expulsion of its foreign workers, the promulgated law stipulated that “every Palestinian refugee who came to Lebanon in 1948 and who wishes to leave it, must obtain an exit and return visa from the Sûreté Générale.”<sup>224</sup> Thousands of Palestinian refugees in Libya and elsewhere were stranded outside Lebanon because they could not apply for a return visa. Although the law was canceled five years later, approximately 75,000 Palestinians lost their residency rights in Lebanon.<sup>225</sup>

The law that governs Palestinian residency in Lebanon also forbids “the non-Lebanese foreigner from engaging in any work or profession in Lebanon unless so licensed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs in accordance with the laws and

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<sup>219</sup> Knudsen, “Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon,” 12.

<sup>220</sup> Al-Natour, “Palestinians in Lebanon,” 363.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Roberts, *Refugees Living with Long-term Displacement*, 100.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid; Al-Natour, “Palestinians in Lebanon,” 365.

<sup>225</sup> Roberts, *Refugees Living with Long-term Displacement*, 100.

rules and regulations in force.”<sup>226</sup> Although the Lebanese authorities took small steps to allow Palestine refugees employment in previously prohibited private sectors, the principle of reciprocity still guides Lebanese labor law. Thus, the Lebanese authorities treat foreign workers in Lebanon in accordance with the rights given to Lebanese workers in each respective country. In this case, the stateless Palestinian refugees cannot work in job sectors that are subject to the reciprocity clause such as law, engineering, and others.<sup>227</sup> They also cannot work in sectors that are restricted for Lebanese citizens, such as law, journalism, and even driving taxis.<sup>228</sup> These restrictions in the job sector have tremendous consequences on the unemployment rate and socio-economic conditions of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. As of December 31, 2010, Palestine refugees had a staggering 56 percent unemployment rate.<sup>229</sup> Considering the resulting socioeconomic challenges that affected the whole population after the arrival of Syrian refugees to Lebanon, poverty and unemployment among Palestine refugees could have yet increased since 2011.

Not only does property law prevent Palestinians from legally acquiring property, but it also forbids them from inheriting real property or passing it to their descendants when they die.<sup>230</sup> Once again under the pretense of upholding the Palestinian right of return, restrictions on property ownership are aimed at preventing the forced resettlement of Palestinians in Lebanon.<sup>231</sup> The only remaining housing opportunities for Palestine refugees are limited to (1) overcrowded refugee camps; (2) unaffordable rentals outside the refugee camps; (3) or through informal and unprotected agreements with Lebanese associates.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> Al-Natour, “Palestinians in Lebanon,” 366.

<sup>227</sup> Chaaban et al., *Socio-economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees*, 13.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*, 6.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Roberts, *Refugees Living with Long-term Displacement*, 102.

<sup>232</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*, 7.

The complicated legal status of Palestinians in Lebanon has profoundly affected their treatment in several other sectors as well. Palestinian refugees have become dependent on “UNRWA as the sole provider of education, healthcare, and social services.”<sup>233</sup> In the education sector, UNRWA has to run its own schools because of the restricted access for Palestinians to attend Lebanese schools.<sup>234</sup> The high costs of higher education and restricted access to subsequent employment further limit the enrollment of Palestinians in Lebanese universities. In the healthcare sector, Palestinians also do not have easy access to the Lebanese public health facilities. Although UNRWA and other non-profit organizations provide some health services for Palestinian refugees, more funding is required to cover their growing health needs.<sup>235</sup>

#### **D. PALESTINIAN IDENTITY**

Over the course of the 20th century, the Palestinians experienced a series of identity transformations that eventually influenced their lives in Lebanon. In the early years of the century, Palestine constituted a part of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>236</sup> Together with modern day Syria and Lebanon, the regions of Palestine were referred to as Greater Syria.<sup>237</sup> The identity of most Muslim Arabs of Palestine at that time, as well as that of most Arabs of the Ottoman Empire, consisted of three shared and uniting characteristics: Arab ethnicity, Muslim religion, and Ottoman citizenship.<sup>238</sup> In 1909, after the Young Turks rose to power and started promoting “Turkish rather than Islamic and Arab tradition,” a united Arab opposition based on a “common language, history, and culture”

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<sup>233</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*, 7.

<sup>234</sup> Roberts, *Refugees Living with Long-term Displacement*, 103

<sup>235</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Situation of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*, 8.

<sup>236</sup> Mahmoud Mi’ari, “Transformation of Collective Identity in Palestine,” *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 44, no. 6 (December 2009): 582, doi: 10.1177/0021909609343410.

<sup>237</sup> Waleed Serhan, “Palestinians in Lebanon: A Racialized Minority or One of Many ‘Others’?,” *Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies* (December 2014), 9, <http://english.dohainstitute.org/file/Get/b34c26cd-99c3-4c30-bffe-59687a598ad5>.

<sup>238</sup> Mi’ari, “Collective Identity in Palestine,” 582.

spread in the Arab region of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>239</sup> After the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I, this Arab identity, rather than the Palestinian Muslim or Ottoman identity, gained widespread support.<sup>240</sup>

The shaping of the Palestinian identity coincided with the increased emigration of European Jews to Palestine. The British rule over Palestine and the intensified Jewish settlement led to a Palestinian Arab national movement that called for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.<sup>241</sup> Palestinians perceived a growing attachment to Palestine quite different from that experienced under Ottoman rule; however, the traditional tribal and parochial identities hindered the formation of a truly national Palestinian identity. Therefore, Palestinians associated themselves more with the stronger religious and Arab identities rather than a Palestinian identity. The defeat of the Arab states in the 1948 Arab-Israeli war only strengthened the Palestinian commitment to the collective Arab identity. Rising Pan-Arabism, led by Egypt's President Gamal Abdel Nasser, gained significant momentum among Palestinian refugees. In 1957, Nasser had promised the return of Palestinian refugees and vowed to defeat Israel: "The refugees will not return while the flag of Israel flies over the soil of Palestine. They will return when the flag of Palestine is hoisted over Arab Palestine."<sup>242</sup>

For the Israelis, on the other hand, the only accepted solution was the resettlement of Palestinian refugees in the Arab states or elsewhere.<sup>243</sup> Motivated by calls for Arab unity in the struggle against Israel and colonialism, many Palestinians considered the pan-Arab organizations prime advocates for their cause. Unsurprisingly in the first two decades after the 1948 war, Palestinians remained drawn to the salient uniting Arab identity.

Palestinian refugees in Lebanon revealed the first indications of a growing loyalty to a distinct Palestinian identity. Coupled with their traumatic refugee experience, the

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<sup>239</sup> Mi'ari, "Collective Identity in Palestine," 582.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> Mi'ari, "Collective Identity in Palestine," 582.

<sup>242</sup> Haddad, "Sectarian Attitudes," 82.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

exclusion of Palestinians from the particular national identities growing in Lebanon and other host countries stimulated a surge in Palestinian national consciousness. Despite not being under Palestinian control, UNRWA's schools in Lebanon constituted an important platform to disseminate ideas of a national belonging to Palestine. Moreover, several Palestinian national occasions served as opportunities to increase the students' awareness of their identity.

Following the first Arab-Israeli war and the failure of the Arab states in more than two decades to achieve their desired unity and liberate Palestine, a new perception for a much needed self-reliance and Palestinian identity intensified among refugees. Arab unity was no longer a foreseeable fundamental aspiration for the Palestinian cause. A realization among refugees that Palestine would be liberated only through Palestinian actions laid the foundation for the subsequent quick rise in Palestinian nationalism from 1965 onward.<sup>244</sup> This transformation from an exclusive pan-Arab identity is evident in the Palestinian National Pact of 1968 that incorporated new elements of Palestinian identity as well as the traditional pan-Arab and Muslim components.

The expulsion of the PLO from Jordan to Lebanon had significant influence on the maturation and militarization of the Palestinian identity. From 1974 onward, Palestinian national unity based on armed struggle and popular resistance dominated the Palestinian political discourse in Lebanon.<sup>245</sup> The PLO set out to expand its own military and social institutions. This Palestinian "state within a state" provided healthcare, education, and other social services to the refugees. Employing up to two thirds of the Palestinian labor force in Lebanon, the PLO developed a powerful economic presence and unmatched autonomous control over its own affairs.<sup>246</sup>

Several other developments during this period further encouraged the commitment to Palestinian nationalism among refugees:

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<sup>244</sup> Chaaban et al., *Socio-economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees*, 3.

<sup>245</sup> Baruch Kimmerling, "The Formation of Palestinian Collective Identities: The Ottoman and Mandatory Periods," *Middle Eastern Studies* 36, no. 2 (April 2000): 69, ProQuest (1683869115).

<sup>246</sup> Roberts, *Refugees Living with Long-term Displacement*, 82.

1. Unlike former Arab-Israeli conflicts, the October War of 1973 did not end with an overwhelming Israeli victory. This war restored the lost pride and self-confidence of the Palestinians after the destruction of the glory associated with the “unconquered Israeli army.”
2. The acceptance of the United Nations General Assembly of the “PLO as an observer-member in the United Nations” legitimized the “wide international recognition of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.”<sup>247</sup>
3. The Palestinian opposition to the Camp David peace agreement between Egypt and Israel in 1978, which resulted in the withdrawal of Egypt from the Arab-Israeli conflict.
4. The involvement of the Palestinians in the Lebanese civil war.
5. The intensified Israeli attacks against Palestinian camps, and the Israeli invasion of South Lebanon in 1978 and 1982.<sup>248</sup>

These developments solidly linked the Palestinian identity in Lebanon to the idea of Palestine as a homeland.<sup>249</sup> Nevertheless, Palestinians in Lebanon, feeling betrayed and forgotten by their own people, denounced the actions of their leadership. The institutions that once expanded following the arrival of the Palestinian leadership in the 1970s closed after the withdrawal of the PLO from Lebanon. In addition, the PLO stopped most of its former financial assistance to the refugee camps.<sup>250</sup> Another disappointment for the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon followed their exclusion from peace talks.<sup>251</sup> Fearing a solution that would compromise their right of return, Palestinian refugees felt alienated from the struggle; however, the buildup of their Palestinian identity over the decades also meant that Lebanon could never be a substitute for Palestine.

Bound by the right of return to Palestine, the Palestinian refugees resisted the development of a new integrated identity within the larger Lebanese society. The evolution of the Palestinian identity from a wider association with the united Arab

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<sup>247</sup> Mi'ari, “Collective Identity in Palestine,” 585-586.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> Lars Erslev Andersen, *The Neglected Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon and the Syrian Refugee Crisis* (Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies, 2016), 19–21, [http://pure.diiis.dk/ws/files/739488/DIIS\\_Report\\_2016\\_12\\_Web.pdf](http://pure.diiis.dk/ws/files/739488/DIIS_Report_2016_12_Web.pdf).

<sup>250</sup> Roberts, *Refugees Living with Long-term Displacement*, 4.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.



movement against Israel in the early days of the struggle to the more specific and exclusive Palestinian character constrained the patterns of personal adjustment acceptable by Palestinian refugees in their new Lebanese environment. Moreover, the life in the closed refugee camps influenced the forging, preserving, and amplifying of the Palestinian identity. The resemblance of Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon to a microcosm of pre-1948 Palestine further deepened the rift between reality and nostalgia. Families once neighbors in the past went on being neighbors in Lebanon; thus, Palestinian refugees still perceive themselves as belonging to their lost villages in Palestine. This commitment, even if it is forced, to a destroyed past inhibits any required adjustment for the integration of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.<sup>252</sup>

## **E. CONCLUSION**

The deteriorating socio-economic conditions of Palestinians in Lebanon have drawn attention to their isolation. Even worse, any peace agreement between the Arab States and Israel might not result in the Palestinians' repatriation from Lebanon. The confessional nature of Lebanon's political system has doomed the fate of Palestinians in the country. The primacy of religious communities in Lebanese society hampers any serious improvement in the legal status of Palestinians. Coupled with the legal and social restrictions in Lebanon, the international community's inability to solve the political problem has created a culture of dependency among refugees. Despite the cultural similarities they share with Lebanese society, Palestinians retain a distinct identity that feeds on their isolation. Therefore, even if new laws were to make their lives bearable, the near future does not look promising for the integration of Palestinians in Lebanon.

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<sup>252</sup> Rosemary Sayigh, "The Struggle for Survival: The Economic Conditions of Palestinian Camp Residents in Lebanon," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 7, no. 2 (1978): 105, ProQuest (59009462); Kimmerling, "Formation of Palestinian Collective Identities," 69.

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## V. COMPARING THE EXTENT OF ARMENIAN AND PALESTINIAN INTEGRATION IN LEBANON

This chapter explores the difference in the degree of integration experienced by the Armenians and the Palestinians in Lebanon. First, the chapter briefly outlines Lebanon's power sharing. There follows an analysis of each case using Ager and Strang's conceptual framework that was introduced in the literature review. The chapter concludes by discussing the implications of this analysis.

### A. INTEGRATION OF ARMENIAN REFUGEES

The application of Ager and Strang's conceptual framework, as shown in Figure 7, outlines the impact by the core domains of integration on the Armenian refugees in Lebanon. Five domains—"Rights and Citizenship," "Safety and Stability," "Social Bonds," "Employment," and "Health"—facilitated the integration of Armenian refugees in Lebanon. The remaining domains—"Language and Cultural Knowledge," "Social Bridges," "Social Links," "Housing," and "Education"—had a mixed impact. They played a less supporting role for integration but still were not powerfully isolating.



Figure 7. Integration of Armenians.<sup>253</sup>

<sup>253</sup> Adapted from: Ager and Strang, "Understanding Integration," 170.

The first favorable domain in the integration of Armenians is “Rights and Citizenship.” Armenians gained Lebanese citizenship under French pressure. Since then, they have only acquired more rights akin to other Lebanese groups. Ager and Strang have emphasized the role of “Citizenship and Rights” in the integration process of refugees. Accordingly, host countries should articulate clear policies on citizenship, and thus the rights granted to refugees.<sup>254</sup> Lebanon evidently lacked a naturalization policy, but the extension of rights and benefits to Armenians accrued to them as Christians. The French desire to increase the numbers of their Christian allies encouraged granting Lebanese citizenship for Armenian refugees. Therefore, in this first major step toward the integration of Armenian refugees in Lebanon, religion played a decisive role.

In the other five key components of the Armenians’ integration in Lebanon, “Employment” constitutes a distinguishing factor. Armenians successfully secured jobs in various sectors of the Lebanese market, though rarely working in the public sector. In a short time, they won the reputation in Lebanese society for their high quality industry and professional ethics.<sup>255</sup> With a per capita income 40 percent higher than the average Lebanese national, Armenian notably contributed to the prospering Lebanese economy.<sup>256</sup> With high qualifications and the ability to integrate within the labor market, the Armenians achieved remarkable economic autonomy and growth in Lebanon. Similarly, in the “Health” domain, Armenians did not face any difficulty, at least not more than any other Lebanese, in securing reliable access to health services.

The “Safety and Stability” domain also facilitated the successful integration of Armenians. Armenian refugees considered Lebanon, despite its periods of civil strife, a safe place in comparison to their experience under Ottoman rule. The adoption of the “positive neutrality” position during the 1975 civil war brought them closer to the Muslim contingency in Lebanon. Although the “neutrality policy” helped minimize Armenian losses, it could not prevent them altogether. Still, the Armenian leaders successfully maintained a significantly stable environment for their community.

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<sup>254</sup> Ager and Strang, “Understanding Integration,” 173–177.

<sup>255</sup> Abramson, “Lebanese Armenians,” 195.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

“Social Bonds” constitute another domain that assisted the integration of Armenians. Social connections with a “like-ethnic group” provide various contributing benefits to the integration of refugees.<sup>257</sup> According to Ager and Strang, “such connection played [a] large part in them [refugees] feeling settled.”<sup>258</sup> Unlike their established economic ties with the larger society, Armenians almost exclusively lived and interacted with other members of the Armenian community. These social bonds between the Armenians themselves guaranteed the protection of their distinct cultural and social identity and, therefore, the ability to integrate without becoming indistinguishable from the rest of the society.

These same social bonds, however, had a negative impact on the remaining integration domains—“Language and Cultural Knowledge,” “Social Bridges,” “Social Links,” “Housing,” and “Education.” The strong inter-ethnic connections weakened ties with other Lebanese groups—“Social Bridges”—and various structures of the Lebanese state—“Social Links.” Moreover, Armenian refugees had neither the language nor the cultural knowledge of their new environment. The need for the Arabic language was unnecessary, explains one Armenian student: “I hardly use Arabic. But sometimes I have to use it to communicate with the Arabic teacher at our school.”<sup>259</sup> Lack of language knowledge worsened the situation: “I avoid working with Arabs because my Arabic is very weak.”<sup>260</sup> Still, Armenians shared with the Lebanese Christians some cultural and religious background. On the other hand, Armenians shared the experience of living under the Ottoman rule with the Muslims.

The “Education” domain measures the accessibility of Armenian refugees to adequate education. Research on the integration of refugees with the host society stresses the importance of education in providing refugees the necessary skills to become self-reliant and active members in that society.<sup>261</sup> Since its formation, the Lebanese

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<sup>257</sup> Ager and Strang, “Understanding Integration,” 178.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

<sup>259</sup> Jebejian, “Patterns of Language Use among Armenians,” 460.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

<sup>261</sup> Ager and Strang, “Understanding Integration,” 172.

educational system was distinctive in the Armenian diaspora, but this positive impact contrasts with other negative elements in the education of Armenians in Lebanon. In the latter part of the 19th Century, for instance, major higher education institutions such as the American University of Beirut (AUB) and Saint Joseph University (USJ) served Lebanon's pre-Genocide Armenian community.<sup>262</sup> With the large influx of Armenian refugees after the Genocide; however, the majority chose to send their children to Armenian academic institutions.

Schools allow contact between refugees and members of the host community and help establish relationships that favor integration.<sup>263</sup> Theoretically, Armenians can attend any school, but they have stressed the role of their own academic institutions in maintaining the Armenian identity: "The Armenian school is the home of the Armenian."<sup>264</sup> Armenians opened their own schools, first, in refugee camps and, later, in the expanding Armenian neighborhoods.<sup>265</sup> By 1948, 59 Armenian schools had opened in Lebanon to serve nearly 11,000 pupils.<sup>266</sup> Jemaran, the secondary school founded by Nikol Aghbalian the Dashnak activist and educator, became "the premier educational institution in the Armenian diaspora."<sup>267</sup> The Armenian community in Lebanon also established Haigazian University, the "only institution of higher learning in the Armenian diaspora."<sup>268</sup> The Armenian community in Lebanon, therefore, had ample access to education, but remained isolated from the rest of the Lebanese society by attending Armenian schools.

In a similar vein, the "Housing" domain evaluates the housing conditions of Armenians in Lebanon. According to Ager and Strang, refugees are more concerned with the social and cultural impact of housing than the actual physical qualities of

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<sup>262</sup> Abramson, "Lebanese Armenians," 202.

<sup>263</sup> Ager and Strang, "Understanding Integration," 172.

<sup>264</sup> Jebejian, "Patterns of Language Use among Armenians," 454.

<sup>265</sup> Abramson, "Lebanese Armenians," 202.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid.

residences.<sup>269</sup> Living in an ethnically homogenous community helps refugees feel “settled.”<sup>270</sup> Up to this present day, the Armenians in Lebanon are concentrated in neighborhoods heavily populated by Armenians. Bourj Hammoud, the traditional Armenian stronghold in Beirut, is even known as “Little Armenia.”<sup>271</sup> Although living in like-ethnic neighborhoods facilitated integration, it also led to the isolation of Armenian refugees: “I live in Bourj Hammoud where my neighbors are Armenians. Actually, once all my neighbors were Armenian ... I am happy that I stayed here where my grocer and butcher are Armenian.”<sup>272</sup> In their framework, Ager and Strang actually encourage refugees to maintain strong relationships with other refugees. They also stress the positive role of “ethnic enclaves,” but they fail to establish what the ideal conditions should be.<sup>273</sup> Should refugees interact exclusively with like-ethnic individuals? When does this interaction become an isolating factor?

In a country different from Lebanon and with a refugee group other than the Armenians, the conditions in the “Language and Cultural Knowledge,” “Social Bridges,” “Social Links,” “Housing,” and “Education” domains could have led to the isolation of the refugee community. Armenians, on the other hand, were skeptical of any efforts that would affect their identity and result in total assimilation. Armenians felt safer to integrate in a country where they could maintain autonomous control over their own affairs.

## **B. INTEGRATION OF PALESTINIAN REFUGEES**

The Palestinians have been refugees for more than six decades now. Yet, they remain isolated from Lebanon’s host communities. Figure 8 shows the application of Ager and Strang’s framework to the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Only two domains—“Social Bonds” and “Language and Cultural Knowledge”—supported the

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<sup>269</sup> Ager and Strang, “Understanding Integration,” 171–172.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid.

<sup>271</sup> Jebejian, “Patterns of Language Use among Armenians,” 460.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid.

<sup>273</sup> Ager and Strang, “Understanding Integration,” 178–179.

integration of Palestinians in Lebanon. The conditions of the remaining domains strongly resulted in the isolation of the Palestinian refugees.



Figure 8. Integration of Palestinians.<sup>274</sup>

Of the two domains favoring integration, “Language and Cultural Knowledge” demonstrates a stronger impact because of the cultural similarities between the Palestinian and Lebanese people. According to Ager and Strang, “being able to speak the main language of the host community is, for example, consistently identified as central to the integration process.”<sup>275</sup> The ability to speak the same language gave Palestinians some minor advantages. They easily interacted with the Lebanese host communities, and unlike the Armenians, Palestinians did not have to adjust to an alien culture.

Palestinian refugees also share similar religious backgrounds with the Lebanese people. Simon Haddad, professor of political science at the Notre Dame University in Lebanon, has researched one important question: “How do the Lebanese view [a] Palestinian presence in their country?”<sup>276</sup> The results of the study, shown in Figure 9, indicate that Lebanese groups, with the exception of Sunnis and Druze, display little warmth toward Palestinians. On the other hand, Lebanese Sunni Muslims exhibit the highest levels of warmth toward Palestinians, in which the majority are Sunni Muslims as well.

<sup>274</sup> Adapted from: Ager and Strang, “Understanding Integration,” 170.

<sup>275</sup> Ager and Strang, “Understanding Integration,” 182.

<sup>276</sup> Haddad, *Palestinian Impasse*, viii.



	Maronites N=218	G-C N=67	G-O N=75	Sunnis N=113	Shiites N=184	Druze N=59
Close	9	10	13	44	23	44
Neutral	17	12	24	24	22	29
Distant	74	78	63	32	55	27

Notes: “N” represents the number of responds; figures are in percentages; and columns may not add up to 100 because results were rounded to the nearest whole number.

G-C stands for Greek-Catholics; G-O stands for Greek-Orthodox.

Figure 9. Relations between Religious Background and Communal Closeness/Hostility to Palestinians (N=716).<sup>277</sup>

Religion, however, was a double-edged sword. On one hand, Lebanese Christians’ and Muslims’ solidarity with their Palestinian counterparts helped the refugees settle in Lebanon after the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. On the other hand, Maronites were concerned about the predominantly Sunni Muslim Palestinian presence and its destabilizing nature in Lebanon’s “precarious sectarian balance, on whose basis Maronite supremacy was founded.”<sup>278</sup>

The second domain favoring integration of Palestinians is what Ager and Strang call “Social Bonds.” Like the Armenians, Palestinians preserved their ties with other members of their community. The “closed” Palestinian camps certainly played an important role in keeping these “Social Bonds” strong. Moreover, Palestinians maintained familiar patterns of relationships by reassembling village and family units in camps. The connections with “like-ethnic groups” helped Palestinians get accustomed to their new lives in Lebanon. More importantly, these ties strengthened the Palestinian identity and “created contact points for isolated individuals.”<sup>279</sup>

Similar to the Armenians, the Palestinians’ strong inter-ethnic ties contrast with the other “Social Connect” domains. While Palestinians interacted with members of their own community, they were definitely cut off from the rest of the Lebanese

<sup>277</sup> Source: Haddad, *Palestinian Impasse*, 82–83.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid., 84

<sup>279</sup> Ager and Strang, “Understanding Integration,” 178.

society—“Social Bridges”—and governmental institutions—“Social Links.” Accordingly, the survey data in Figure 10 suggests that roughly 20 percent of the Lebanese population had personal contacts with Palestinians.

	Maronites N=302	G-C N=106	G-O N=100	Sunnis N=190	Shiites N=276	Druze N=72
Yes	20	22	35	60	42	32
No	80	78	65	40	58	68

G-C stands for Greek-Catholics; G-O stands for Greek-Orthodox.

Figure 10. Frequency of Contact with Palestinians Based on Religious Background (N=1046).<sup>280</sup>

Once again, religion is related to the degree of contact between members of Lebanese groups and Palestinian refugees. Lebanese Christians, in general, and Maronites specifically had the least interaction with Palestinians. On the other hand, Lebanese Sunnis interacted the most with Palestinians. These results are understandable and even expected because most of the Palestinians who came in 1948 settled near or inside Sunni enclaves.<sup>281</sup>

Contrary to the Armenians in Lebanon, the majority of Palestinian refugees did not obtain Lebanese citizenship. In some rare cases, Lebanese authorities naturalized several thousands of Palestinians balanced out among different religious sects.<sup>282</sup> Still, the opposition to Palestinian resettlement in Lebanon comes from all spectrums of society.<sup>283</sup> Lebanese political parties even accuse each other of promoting naturalization.<sup>284</sup> In this regard, the popular perception has been consistent: (1) the

<sup>280</sup> Source: Haddad, *Palestinian Impasse*, 91–93.

<sup>281</sup> Haddad, *Palestinian Impasse*, 91–93.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid., 40–47.

<sup>283</sup> Haddad, *Palestinian Impasse*, 40–47.

<sup>284</sup> Chaaban et al., *Socio-economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees*, 7.

naturalization of Palestinian refugees would upset the delicate balance between Lebanese Christians and Muslims; (2) and negate the refugees' right to return to Palestine.<sup>285</sup>

The refugees themselves have also insisted on the right of return to Palestine. Brigadier Sultan Abu al-Aynayn, the Palestine Authority representative in Lebanon, explains: "I have not fought 30 years of my life to stay here ... Although I love Lebanon, why should I take up Lebanese nationality? If one hundred thousand Palestinians are made to stay here, I can't guarantee they won't fight their way out."<sup>286</sup> A large majority of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon share the sentiments of Brigadier Abu al-Aynayn. As Figure 11 demonstrates, a total of 57 and 79 percent Palestinian respondents to a survey, respectively, rejected the options of citizenship and permanent settlement in Lebanon.

Would you accept Lebanese citizenship?		
	Number	Percentage
Yes	51	19
No	155	57
Unsure	64	24
Total	270	100

Would you accept permanent settlement in Lebanon?		
	Number	Percentage
Yes	41	15
No	214	79
Unsure	17	6
Total	272	100

Figure 11. Probing Alternatives for Resolving the Palestinian Problem.<sup>287</sup>

The restrictions on Palestinians have extended to the legal rights and protections that the Lebanese state affords its citizens. Poor housing and living conditions; negligible access to public education, health, and social services; and high rates of unemployment clearly hamper the integration of Palestinians. Understandably, the vast majority of

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<sup>285</sup> Haddad, *Palestinian Impasse*, 40–47.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid., 138.

<sup>287</sup> Source: Haddad, *Palestinian Impasse*, 137.

Palestinian “respondents score low on the socio-economic satisfaction items” in Haddad’s survey, as shown in Figure 12.<sup>288</sup>

Are you satisfied with your personal economic condition?		
	Number	Percentage
Yes	4	2
No	248	92
Unsure	19	7
Total	271	101*

I am satisfied with my current life conditions		
	Number	Percentage
Yes	7	3
No	262	97
Total	272	100

Figure 12. Socio-economic Satisfaction Items.<sup>289</sup>

The poor socio-economic conditions of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are the result of deliberate actions by the Lebanese government, which regards the Palestinians “neither as nationals nor foreigners but simply as non-nationals.”<sup>290</sup> A restrictive policy of “strangulation,” as it is referred to by Palestinians, limits their ability to find work and own property.<sup>291</sup> Therefore, in terms of “Employment,” “Housing,” “Education,” and “Health” domains, the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are subject to discriminatory policies that reinforce their isolation.

In the “Safety and Stability” domain, the Lebanese authorities were unsuccessful in removing any barriers that inhibit the participation of Palestinian refugees in the mainstream society. As reported by Ager and Strang, “refugees often indicated that if they did not feel physically safe in an area they could not feel integrated.”<sup>292</sup> For the first

<sup>288</sup> Haddad, *Palestinian Impasse*, 130.

<sup>289</sup> Source: Haddad, *Palestinian Impasse*, 130.

<sup>290</sup> Haddad, *Palestinian Impasse*, 130.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid.

<sup>292</sup> Ager and Strang, “Understanding Integration,” 183–184.

few years after the arrival of Palestinians in 1948, and until 1958, the Lebanese regime took positive steps to support the safety and stability of refugees. After 1958, however, the Lebanese authorities pressured the Palestinians by initiating aggressive policies against them.<sup>293</sup> The Palestinians in Lebanon were not blameless either. From southern Lebanon, the PLO attacked Israel, which in its turn retaliated and even launched preemptive raids against Palestinian targets.<sup>294</sup> When the civil war erupted in 1975, radical Palestinian groups sided with left-wing Muslim militias against Christian right-wing factions.<sup>295</sup> This hostile environment in Lebanon, therefore, did not facilitate the integration of Palestinian refugees.

### C. CONCLUSION

The two cases provide support for the argument that religious affiliation can infringe on political and even humanitarian decisions, which affects the integration of refugees in Lebanon. Their religious identity as Christians played an important role in the decision to naturalize the Armenians and, thus, their integration. In the Palestinian case, in which most refugees are Sunni Muslims, preserving the sectarian balance in Lebanese society has been of utmost importance to the government. Figure 13 summarizes the analysis of the two cases using Ager and Strang's framework but adds a new component, religion that could affect all other domains as well:

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<sup>293</sup> Haddad, *Palestinian Impasse*, 41.

<sup>294</sup> Roberts, *Refugees Living with Long-term Displacement*, 83.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid.

Domain of Integration	Armenians	Palestinians
Rights and Citizenship	Positive	Negative
Language and Cultural Knowledge	Mixed	Positive
Safety and Stability	Positive	Negative
Social Bridges	Mixed	Negative
Social Bonds	Positive	Positive
Social Links	Mixed	Negative
Employment	Positive	Negative
Housing	Mixed	Negative
Education	Mixed	Negative
Health	Positive	Negative
Religion	Positive	Negative

Figure 13. Domains of Integration.

The Armenian case study also suggests that although having language and cultural knowledge of the host society is important for successful integration, refugees want to preserve their own culture. Probably, one of the few positive points about the Lebanese political system's encouragement of strong communal attachments is that it fit with the expectations of Armenians to take care of their own affairs. The evolution of their identity to include a Lebanese element contrasts with that of the Palestinians who even felt that they did not belong to Palestine anymore, but only to the camps in which they live.

More broadly, many European countries have taken a hardline position against the flow of refugees from the Middle East. Danish historian Bo Lidegaard expresses an attitude that many in other countries share, "We are a multiethnic society today, and we have to realize it—but we are not and should never become a multicultural society."<sup>296</sup> With similar themes erupting across Europe, a Pew research study found that "Europeans do not see growing diversity as making their countries better."<sup>297</sup> The Armenian and

<sup>296</sup> David Zucchino, "'I've Become a Racist': Migrant Wave Unleashes Danish Tensions over Identity," *New York Times*, September 5, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/06/world/europe/denmark-migrants-refugees-racism.html>.

<sup>297</sup> Jacob Poushter, "European Opinions of the Refugee Crisis in 5 Charts," Pew Research Center, September 16, 2016, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/09/16/european-opinions-of-the-refugee-crisis-in-5-charts>.

Palestinian cases in Lebanon suggest that successful integration is not affected by the refugees' cultural or ethnic traits in general but primarily by their religious affiliation. The increasing divisions along religious lines, therefore, will inhibit the integration of thousands of refugees.

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## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Lebanon now hosts the largest refugee population per capita in the world.<sup>298</sup> By January 2015, the number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon exceeded a quarter of that nation's original population of 4.4 million.<sup>299</sup> This burgeoning influx numbers of refugees into Lebanon has placed host communities under enormous pressure. Figure 14 shows the most vulnerable regions in Lebanon, in which both Lebanese and refugee communities face economic deprivation. The UNHCR reports that more than a million Lebanese people are now vulnerable and require immediate assistance.<sup>300</sup>

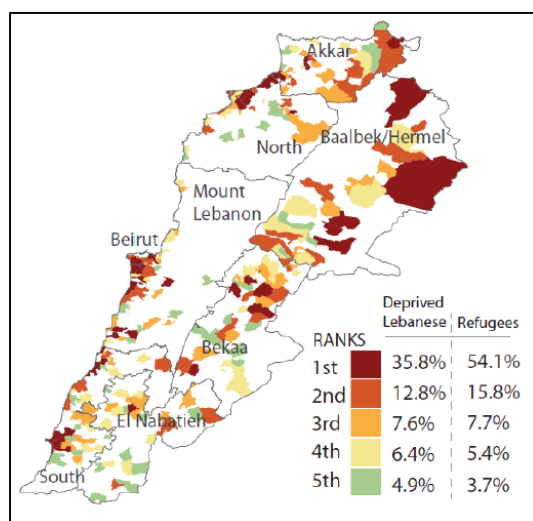


Figure 14. Most Vulnerable Regions.<sup>301</sup>

<sup>298</sup> European Commission: Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, *Lebanon: Syria Crisis* (ECHO FACTSHEET) (Brussels: Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, March 2017), 1, [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/lebanon\\_syrian\\_crisis\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/lebanon_syrian_crisis_en.pdf).

<sup>299</sup> Cathrine Thorleifsson, "The Limits of Hospitality: Coping Strategies among Displaced Syrians in Lebanon," *Third World Quarterly* 37, no. 6 (2016): 1071, doi: 10.1080/01436597.2016.1138843; Filippo Dionigi, *Syrian Refugee Crisis in Lebanon*, 9.

<sup>300</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Lebanon: Inter-Agency Coordination March 2017 Statistical Dashboard* (Beirut: Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon, 2017), [http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Interagency\\_Multisector\\_Dashboard\\_Mar\\_2017\\_final%20%281%29.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Interagency_Multisector_Dashboard_Mar_2017_final%20%281%29.pdf).

<sup>301</sup> Ibid.

The Lebanese government, however, has no clear strategy to respond to the crisis. In those early years of the Syrian conflict, Lebanon adopted an “open door” policy that allowed the entry of any Syrian into the country. Many believe this policy was the result of the political stalemate in the country rather than any deliberate response by the Lebanese government.<sup>302</sup> In October 2014, the government revised its policy to limit and even stop the flow of Syrians into Lebanon. The contradictory Lebanese responses to the refugee crisis have left the situation in Lebanon at the verge of exploding.

Violence spilling over from the conflict in Syria threatens Lebanon’s delicate stability. In 2014, terrorists affiliated with ISIS and Jabhat al-Nusra clashed with the Lebanese Armed Forces in the border town of Aarsal, a key refugee hub.<sup>303</sup> Although the military operations swiftly restored order to this town holding some 20,000 Syrian refugees, the situation in Aarsal, and in Lebanon in general, is still of concern.<sup>304</sup> In the same year, terrorists conducted 14 car bombings or suicide attacks in various Lebanese regions, killing 11 people.<sup>305</sup> The battle in Aarsal alarmed both the domestic and international communities and raised concerns about security threats associated with unmanaged refugee flows. Likewise, Europe faces similar, if not more serious, threats arising from admitting Syrian refugees. Although no concrete evidence exists to prove that terrorists “systematically use the flow of refugees to enter Europe unnoticed,” two perpetrators of the November 13 Paris terrorist attacks had arrived on the European continent through Greece as part of the large influx of refugees from Syria.<sup>306</sup> Most Syrians fleeing their country are searching for relative safety, but their living and social

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<sup>302</sup> Maja Janmyr, “The Legal Status of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon” (working paper, Refugee Research and Policy, Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, American University of Beirut, Beirut, March 2016), 7, [https://www.aub.edu.lb/ifi/publications/Documents/working\\_papers/20160331\\_Maja\\_Janmyr.pdf](https://www.aub.edu.lb/ifi/publications/Documents/working_papers/20160331_Maja_Janmyr.pdf).

<sup>303</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Country Summary: Lebanon* (Beirut: Human Rights Watch, January 2015), 1, [https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related\\_material/lebanon\\_5.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/lebanon_5.pdf).

<sup>304</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Lebanon: Aarsal Influx Inter-Agency Update* (Geneva: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2013), <https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=3548>.

<sup>305</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Country Summary: Lebanon*, 1.

<sup>306</sup> “211 Terrorist Attacks Carried out in EU Member States in 2015, New Europol Report Reveals,” Europol, July 20, 2016, <https://www.europol.europa.eu/newsroom/news/211-terrorist-attacks-carried-out-in-eu-member-states-in-2015-new-europol-report-reveals>.

conditions after they arrive in their host country significantly influence their future behavior. The successful integration of Syrian refugees, therefore, becomes a security necessity to mitigate any risk of their radicalization.

This chapter applies the lessons learned from the Armenian and Palestinian case studies to the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon. The chapter uses the same conceptual framework that was applied in the analysis of each case study to provide recommendations for the integration of Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

## **A. INTEGRATION OF SYRIAN REFUGEES**

The Syrian refugee crisis poses major differences from the two case studies—the integration of Armenian and Palestinian refugees—presented earlier. Syrian refugees actually have a chance of returning to Syria once the conflict ends whereas the situation of both Palestinians and Armenians is more complicated. From the beginning of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the chances that Palestinian refugees could actually go back to their homes looked bleak. Yet, for more than six decades, Lebanese authorities have treated their residency in Lebanon as temporary. Even the international community has handled the Palestinian refugee problem as a momentary situation. Scholar Michael Kagan writes that “Every year, the General Assembly goes through the ritual of noting ‘with regret that the [United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine] UNCCP has been unable to find means of achieving progress’ in implementing Resolution 194’s provisions for refugee return and compensation, and then asks the UNCCP ‘to continue exerting efforts’ and ‘to report’ the following year.”<sup>307</sup> Similarly, in the Armenian case, the treaties between the Allies and Turkey destroyed the prospect of having an independent homeland that the Armenian refugees in Lebanon could return to after World War I ended. The resolution of the Syrian conflict, on the other hand, can help ease the refugee crisis in Lebanon, but Lebanese authorities should not repeat the mistake of considering the situation temporary and enforce strict restrictions as it did with the Palestinian refugees. Instead, Lebanese authorities should treat the whole integration process of

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<sup>307</sup> Andersen, *Neglected Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*, 19–21.

Syrian refugees as a transitory stage, one that can benefit both Lebanese and Syrian communities.

#### (1) Rights and Citizenship

Apparently granting the Syrian refugees Lebanese citizenship is out of the question; according to one survey, 80 percent of Lebanese people in some areas believe that the mere presence of Syrians threatens the sectarian balance.<sup>308</sup> This figure, however, should not stop the Lebanese government from according Syrians in the country some political representation even if only at the municipal level. The analysis of the Armenian case study shows that after the Armenian community was accorded political representation in the parliament, its representatives were able to voice its specific needs, including employment, education, housing, and healthcare. The Lebanese authorities, therefore, should guarantee the Syrian refugees a representative number of political seats like any other minority in the country. The political quota afforded to the Syrians, however, should not come at the expense of other groups in the country but under a separate and temporary system.

#### (2) Language and Cultural Knowledge

The Syrians are not culturally different from the Lebanese host communities. In addition, they can interact easily with the Lebanese population. The Armenian and Palestinian case studies indicate that the refugees are interested in preserving some of their unique cultural characteristics. A possible course of action in this case is to introduce history lessons about Syria in the education of refugees. This academic framework would contribute to sustaining the Syrian identity in future generations.

#### (3) Safety and Stability

The Lebanese authorities should take into serious consideration the creation of a safe and stable environment not only for Syrian refugees but also for the Lebanese

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<sup>308</sup> Ministry of Social Affairs and Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, *Social Stability Sector* (Beirut: Ministry of Social Affairs), accessed May 9, 2017, 2, <https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=12833>.

population. The whole security apparatus in Lebanon, including the Lebanese Armed Forces, is fighting terrorism on a daily basis. Terrorist arrests show that Syrian refugees have been increasingly prone to radicalization. Some municipalities have implemented a series of restrictions including curfews on Syrian refugees. These regulations, however, tend to isolate the Syrians from the rest of the Lebanese population without achieving any considerable improvements. One study has found that, in Lebanon, “as many as 91 percent of host communities believe that the presence of displaced Syrians poses a security threat to them.”<sup>309</sup> Alarming, this figure nearly echoes the same sentiments toward the Palestinian refugees. The negative stigma that contributed to the isolation of the Palestinian refugees should not be expanded to include the Syrians in Lebanon. Therefore, the Lebanese government should enact new laws that protect Syrian refugees from racial profiling by law enforcement agencies. This approach builds a trusting relationship between the Syrians and the Lebanese security forces. The Palestinian case study also showed that isolated Palestinian refugees were particularly prone to embrace jihadist ideologies. Therefore, the Lebanese authorities should collaborate with religious leaders to correct any misinterpretations of Islam in vulnerable Syrian refugee communities.

#### (4) Social Bridges

Several factors affect the social connections between Lebanese host communities and the Syrian refugees living within those communities. The initial warmth toward Syrian refugees has changed over time mainly because of the intensified labor competition, especially in low-end jobs. The Syrian refugees are already receiving direct aid from international organizations and, therefore, are willing to accept lower wages than the rest of the population.<sup>310</sup> This increased job competition has created hostility between the locals and the Syrian refugees. In addition, the curfews imposed by many

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<sup>309</sup> Ministry of Social Affairs and Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, *Social Stability*, 2.

<sup>310</sup> Refugee Studies Center, *The Syrian Humanitarian Disaster: Disparities in Perceptions, Aspirations and Behavior in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey* (RSC Research in Brief 3) (Oxford: Refugee Studies Center, University of Oxford, 2015), 3, <https://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications/the-syrian-humanitarian-disaster-disparities-in-perceptions-aspirations-and-behaviour-in-lebanon-jordan-and-turkey/@@download/file>.

municipalities deepen the rift between the refugees and host communities. Therefore, to enhance the social connections between host and refugee communities, the recommended strategy should address these underlying causes of hostility. First, aid from international organizations should also target the vulnerable Lebanese population as well. Second, the Lebanese government should develop the rural areas where many of the vulnerable population live. A possible course of action, in this case and one that is much needed nowadays, is to develop a new civilian airport in the northern region of Lebanon. This and other public utilities could employ a large number of Lebanese people and, thus, ease the job competition with the Syrian refugees. Finally, the government should prohibit the illegal curfews in local municipalities that increase the tensions between the two communities.

#### (5) Social Bonds

Given their large numbers in Lebanon, the Syrians face no difficulty having in-group connections with other members of their refugee communities. These ties, however, seem to fall along sectarian lines similar to the ones that drive the conflict in Syria. Therefore, Lebanese authorities should sponsor workshops that promote dialogue and conflict prevention among Syrian groups of different religions. The Syrian leaders in Lebanon, like the Armenian leaders who resisted inter-communal violence, bear a huge responsibility in mending their internal rifts. In a similar vein to the international peace talks between the Syrian opposition and the regime, the Lebanese government should promote a neutral venue where the Syrians can agree that eventually they would have to live side-by-side peacefully. First, the Lebanese authorities should lay the foundation of this policy by convincing the Syrian community leaders of the importance of intra-communal dialogue. For the Syrians, this step is very important as it would legitimize such workshops. Then, with the approval of the Syrian leaders, these workshops should primarily target the youth of various groups within the Syrian refugee communities in Lebanon.

## (6) Social Links

The ties between refugees and Lebanese governmental institutions in general are profoundly affected by the ability of local municipalities to provide some basic services. As previously noted, the Palestinian refugees live in isolated closed camps and barely receive any services from the Lebanese public sector. The need for increased “Social Links” is even higher in the case of Syrian refugees that are spread all across the country without being confined to refugee camps. Even before the Syrian refugee crisis, however, local municipalities faced major challenges: “70 percent of municipalities were too small to provide basic services pre-crisis, 57 percent lacked an administrative structure, and 40 percent had only a single employee (often working on a part-time or voluntary basis).”<sup>311</sup> The Lebanese government, therefore, should allocate more funds for training, staffing, and equipping local municipalities to serve the needs of Syrian refugees. This approach grants the Syrian refugees enhanced access to governmental services that was lacking in the case of Palestinians in Lebanon. This approach helps strengthen the links between local authorities and the communities they serve, and thereby promotes the successful integration of Syrian refugees.

## (7) Education

The influx of Syrian refugees has exerted enormous pressure on the Lebanese educational system, “not only in terms of numbers, but also in terms of variety of needs and impact on the quality of the education system.”<sup>312</sup> The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) introduced several important measures to provide Syrian children with formal education. In 2014, for example, MEHE initiated the “Reaching All Children with Education” (RACE) plan to increase the number of Syrian children with access to education.<sup>313</sup> The program “allowed refugees to enroll in school without

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<sup>311</sup> Government of Lebanon and the United Nations, *Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017–2020* (Beirut: Government of Lebanon and the United Nations, 2017), 146, [http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2017\\_2020\\_LCRP\\_ENG-1.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2017_2020_LCRP_ENG-1.pdf).

<sup>312</sup> Government of Lebanon and the United Nations, *Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2015–2016: Education* (Beirut, Government of Lebanon and the United Nations, 2014), 61, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/44055>.

<sup>313</sup> Ibid.

providing proof of legal residency, waived school enrollment fees, and opened up afternoon ‘second shift’ classes in 238 public schools to provide Syrians with formal education.”<sup>314</sup> Despite all the domestic effort and international support, more than half of “school aged refugees [remained] out of formal education” during the school year 2016–2017.<sup>315</sup>

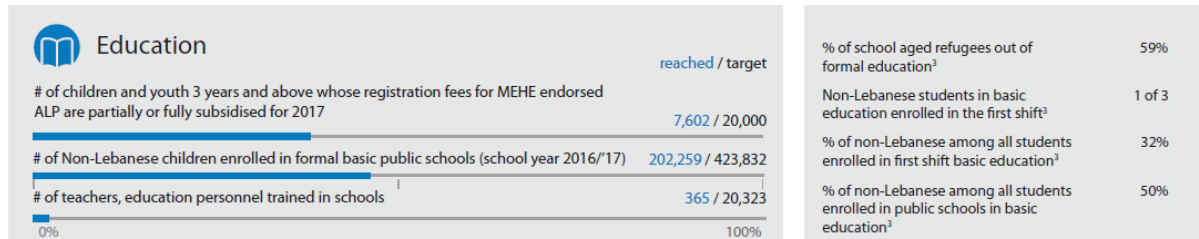


Figure 15. Lebanon Crisis Response – Education.<sup>316</sup>

To address this critical issue, integration policy proposed in this thesis suggests some major reforms and temporary measures to the Lebanese educational system. In both the Armenian and Palestinian case studies, the refugees benefited from having an education that stressed the preservation of their identity. The Palestinian case study, however, reveals that in the education sector, the Palestinians were highly dependent on UNRWA whereas the Armenians were more autonomous. Also, the Palestinians were not enthusiastic about getting an education because it would not help them secure a job later. Therefore, first, it is recommended that MEHE temporarily allow non-formal education to Syrian children. Second, qualified Syrian teachers should be central to this plan. They could provide education for the most vulnerable refugees who cannot attend public schools. This approach breaks the dependency on Lebanese and international aid and promotes the preservation of the Syrian identity. Lastly, the Lebanese authorities should present a clear roadmap that details the legal pathways for Syrians into the labor market. This roadmap would serve as an incentive for Syrian refugees to continue their education.

<sup>314</sup> “‘Growing up Without an Education’: Barriers to Education for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon,” Human Rights Watch, July 19, 2016, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/07/19/growing-without-education/barriers-education-syrian-refugee-children-lebanon>.

<sup>315</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *March 2017 Statistical Dashboard*.

<sup>316</sup> Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *March 2017 Statistical Dashboard*.



## (8) Housing

The Lebanese authorities have refused to allow the building of refugee camps to house the Syrian refugees. Many refer to Lebanon's bad experience with the Palestinian camps to support their refusal for new camps.<sup>317</sup> UNHCR's numbers, shown in Figure 16, reveal that the majority of Syrian refugees live in bad housing conditions.

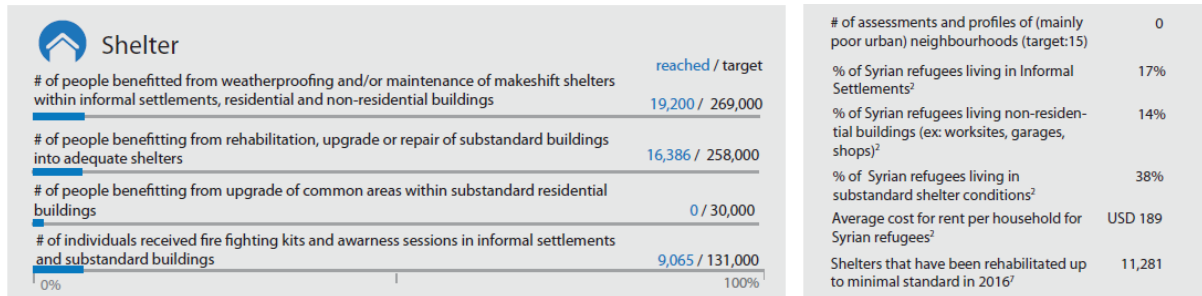


Figure 16. Lebanon Crisis Response – Shelter.<sup>318</sup>

The Armenian and Palestinian case studies, however, reveal that refugees are affected more by the social aspect of housing than the physical qualities. One positive outcome of the Lebanese refusal to build new camps is the increased interaction that results between the Lebanese host communities and the refugees. Many Syrian refugees would agree with this decision as well. Landlords, however, have taken advantage of the increased demand for housing to raise rents, thus affecting both Lebanese and Syrian communities. Therefore, it is recommended that Lebanese authorities empower local municipalities to oversee and prevent any unjustified hike in rent.

## (9) Employment

Prior to the Syrian refugee crisis, the Lebanese economy suffered from high unemployment and poverty rates.<sup>319</sup> The World Bank estimated that the “Lebanese economy needs to create six times as many jobs simply to absorb the regular market

<sup>317</sup> Dionigi, *Syrian Refugee Crisis in Lebanon*, 21–22.

<sup>318</sup> Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *March 2017 Statistical Dashboard*.

<sup>319</sup> Government of Lebanon and the United Nations, *Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017–2020*, 73.

entrants.”<sup>320</sup> The influx of Syrian refugees has only aggravated the economic challenges by increasing the workforce that competes for low-skilled jobs.<sup>321</sup> In addition, the International Labor Organization estimates that 90 percent of Syrian refugees in Lebanon work without a formal contract.<sup>322</sup> One lesson learned from the Armenian case study is that excellence in the employment sector would promote refugees’ self-reliance and increase their contact with Lebanese business owners. Another lesson learned from the Palestinian case study is that economic deprivation increases the isolation of refugees. The response to the crisis should include creating the necessary laws that would regulate informal Syrian labor and guarantee social protection for employed refugees. More importantly, the Lebanese authorities should allow Syrians to open their own businesses as it would create more jobs for the refugees.

#### (10) Health

The Lebanese health sector could play an important role in the integration of the Syrian refugees. As shown in Figure 17, UNHCR reports that as many as 16 percent of Syrian refugees could not access primary healthcare in the last six months.

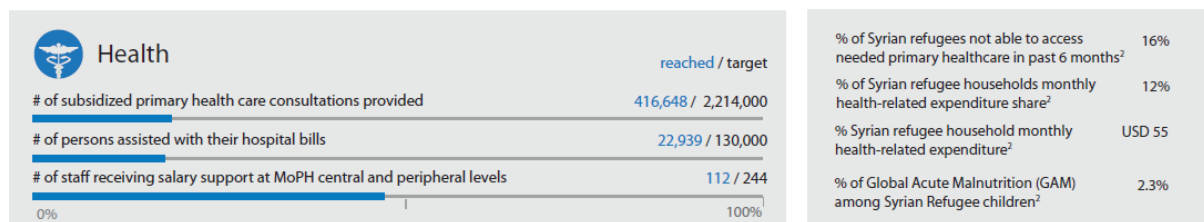


Figure 17. Lebanon Crisis Response – Health.<sup>323</sup>

A major contributor to the isolation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is their increasingly poor healthcare coverage. Similarly, many Syrians prefer relocating to a

<sup>320</sup> Government of Lebanon and the United Nations, *Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017–2020*, 102.

<sup>321</sup> Ibid.

<sup>322</sup> “Syrian Refugees in Lebanon Face Harsh Working Conditions,” International Labor Organization, April 2, 2014, [http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_240126/lang-en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_240126/lang-en/index.htm).

<sup>323</sup> Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *March 2017 Statistical Dashboard*.

third country or even going back to Syria just to have better access to health services. The refugee integration policy, therefore, should address, at a minimum, the basic health needs of Syrians in Lebanon. The Palestinian case study provides a guideline to follow. Funding from international donors should help establish a nationwide network of primary healthcare facilities that are not reserved only for the Syrian refugees. This way the Lebanese host communities could regard the Syrian refugees as beneficial rather than just a cost to bear. This approach breaks the high dependency on expensive privatized healthcare facilities that threatens all vulnerable populations. The Lebanese Ministry of Health should assign each public healthcare facility doctors that can treat post-traumatic stress disorder or any other refugee-related medical condition.

## **B. CONCLUSION**

Contrary to the Lebanese popular perception, the presence of Syrian refugees in Lebanon can benefit the country by bringing in much needed resources and development projects. The international community has already poured millions of dollars into Lebanon to finance the UNHCR mission in Lebanon, though the funds received only amount to 8 percent of the total appeal.<sup>324</sup> The international community, therefore, should take a larger role in facilitating the integration of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. The recommendations advanced in this chapter address both the Lebanese government and refugee community because the Syrians also have an important responsibility in the integration process. On this matter, the Armenian case offers an important observation. During the civil war, the Armenians transcended their religious affiliation to reach out to other constituents in Lebanon. This lesson, applied to the Syrian refugees, means that they should distance themselves from the internal Lebanese divisions. If they follow this trajectory, the Syrian refugees could dissipate the fear that accompanies their presence in Lebanon.

Lebanon has always been a safe haven for persecuted people and minorities. Its religious diversity and freedom also distinguish it from many other Middle Eastern

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<sup>324</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *LCPR 2017 Quarter 1 Funding Update*, (Beirut: Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon, March 31, 2017), <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=13350>.

countries. The Lebanese people learned, the hard way, that there is no other way but for the various religious minorities to live together in harmony. Moreover, the Muslim factions in the country, at first, opposed the integration of Armenians in Lebanon; however, they experienced, together with their Christian partners, the benefits of this successful integration. With the proper strategies, therefore, the Lebanese government can promote the successful integration of Syrian refugees and further contribute to Lebanon's unique diversity.

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